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**THEORIZING IDENTITY AT WORK: EXOTIC DANCING AS A SITE FOR
ORGANIZATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL RESEARCH**

GINA MICHELLE CHRISTINE GRANDY

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of the
University of Northumbria of Newcastle
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Research undertaken in the School of Business

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Abstract

There is a plethora of research in organization studies that explores identity at work. Most of this research, however, focuses upon one or two aspects of identity without exploring the intersections and interactions among these different aspects. Recently, it has also been argued that the literature fails to pay adequate attention to the role of agency in identity construction. Moreover, identity researchers are critiquing the notion of identity as stable and singular, contending identity is not about what one becomes, rather it is a process of becoming underpinned by multiplicity, flux and contradiction.

Conceptualizing identity as a process of becoming this research explored *how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity*. Adopting a social constructivist paradigm individual experience, that of researcher and ‘participants’, has been a central focus in doing this. This research offers a more complete picture of identity at work by capturing agency, as well as various (re)sources that the individual might draw upon. To illuminate new ways of ‘seeing’ identity at work, this research looked to an ‘alternative site’ of study, that is, exotic dancing, to explore work-based identity. *For Your Eyes Only (FYEO)*, a chain of ‘gentlemen’s’ clubs located in the United Kingdom, was selected as the site of study.

Through a one-year archival analysis of popular press and corporate documents a number of discourses circulating about exotic dancing surfaced, including, discourses of *Public Dis(Order)*, *Criminality*, *Deviance and Immorality*, *Surveillance*, *Growth* and *Art and Entertainment*. Several of these discourses position sex work, specifically exotic dancing, as bad sex and thus ‘dirty work’. This illuminates the historical, subjective and objective aspects of organizational life, as well as how occupational status plays a role in an individual’s identity work. Coupled with this, through interviews with dancers and managers, as well as analysis of corporate documents and popular press accounts of the club, the extent to which the organization was a (re)source in the individual’s identity construction became apparent. *FYEO* makes great efforts to position the club in a positive way in the industry and to various constituents, constructing an organizational identity based upon exclusivity and ‘high quality’ service. In drawing upon these macro (re)sources and relations with others dancers engage in a variety of processes to construct work-based identity roles as a means of ‘ordering’ or making sense of who they, and others, are. The meanings associated with these roles are constantly negotiated and dancers often perform several different, sometimes contradictory, roles in their process of becoming.

This research offers another way to understand agency in identity at work. Through the individual’s struggles to balance the multiplicity and contradictions with her desire for ‘order’, it is conceptualized that agency may be present even when we cannot ‘see’ it. The contradictions heard through individual’s stories illustrate that agency exists, both as actions we can see, as well as in the ‘internal’ struggles an individual experiences. Emotion work is re-conceptualized to capture the agency seen, and heard, through the stories told by individuals. Furthermore, dirty work, identity regulation as a form of organizational control and social identity are fused with emotion work as a heuristic for identity at work researchers to illuminate various interacting and intersecting macro, meso and micro (re)sources the individual draws upon in her identity at work. Finally, in exploring the sameness and difference between ‘dirty work’, specifically exotic dancing in this case, and other forms of work this research makes space for, and calls for, alternative learning in organization studies.

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To Albert... for starting me on this journey and helping me to see the world differently.

To Sharon... for friendship, honesty, support and showing me the path to completion.

To my parents... for being there and saying the right things at the right times.

To my other loved ones, old and new... for your tolerance, compassion, and laughter despite my inability to show up or call when I say I will.

Author's Declaration

I acknowledge that the work presented in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award, except that entailed by research training, and the work is the result of my individual effort. I have also completed the required research training and milestones required for the degree.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research process that unfolds as I study *how the individual makes sense of her work-based identity*. It sets out to ground the storyline of this thesis in my own lived experiences, present my understanding of identity as employed in this study, introduce an alternative lens for understanding identity at work which fuses emotion work, dirty work, social identity and identity regulations as a form of organizational control, propose sex work as a site for research in organization studies, establish the research parameters, and provide a summary of each of the chapters to be developed in this research.

In exploring how individuals make sense of their identity construction, I adopt a social constructivist perspective (Crotty, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). I understand social constructivism to be a perspective that views individuals as continually creating and negotiating meaning, models and concepts to make sense of experiences (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Schwandt, 2000). The individual is seen to be subjective in that she co-creates the realities she experiences. These processes are informed by those around us, as well as specific historical, cultural, social and political contexts. In adopting such an approach I embrace the local and multiple, constructed realities that emerge. At the same time, my understanding of social constructivism takes into account the material effects (e.g., pay discrimination, violence) that arise from specific social, cultural or political

contexts of these constructed realities (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). In this way, social constructivism is seen to envelope relativism through multiple, negotiated meanings (Lincoln and Guba, 2000), realism through consideration of material effects (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000) and movement through ongoing processes of human thoughts, action and interaction (Chia, 1996).

As I tell this story, I am not presenting myself as a neutral party presenting ‘facts’ about work-based identity. As argued by Richardson (2000), I see myself as part of the research process, fully engaged in constructing, negotiating and struggling with the contradictions and tensions of trying to ‘hear’ the voices of individuals, while simultaneously co-creating the realities that I present. In effect, I am making sense of how others make sense of their identity construction, or as put by Thomas and Davies (2005:688), my “interpretations are...a construction of the construction made by the actors studied”. I am not concerned with locating the ‘truth’ about work-based identity. My concern is in understanding a set of truths that are co-created by those I meet throughout this research and myself. My interest in understanding how individuals come to construct and understand their work-based identities is informed by my own lived experiences. As such, I feel it necessary to first provide the reader with a glimpse into my own struggles with ‘who I am’ and how these experiences have led to the research at hand.

1.1. Struggles of Identity Construction

As long as I can remember I have contemplated 'who' or 'what' I was going to be professionally when I 'grew up'. It was as if at some point in my life I would achieve a state where I would be certain about who I was professionally and this would inform how others understood me. As a teenager, university graduate, business professional and academic, I interpret others around me to have a clearer and more static understanding of their work-based identities. For me, such stability only comes in passing moments. I have never been certain about who I am, but I have always been distracted by figuring it out.

I pursued a degree in business administration simply because, according to my high school guidance counsellor, I had three options, education, nursing or business. I eliminated the first two because my father was a teacher and my mother a nurse and neither seemed a fit for me. The construction of my work-based identity is often marked by figuring out what I am not, for example, a nurse, an accountant, or a marketer. My search for stability in a work-based identity 'right' for me is complicated by my understanding that occupational categories, such as 'health and safety advisor' or 'professor', do not capture the diversity of my lived experiences (e.g., gender, age, religion, family, culture). There are certain 'rules' that emerge from various organizational, professional and social relations that shape how I come to understand myself, and others, inside and outside work boundaries. At the same time, there is a distinctiveness about my work-based identities that does not emerge through occupational categories. Moreover, I often live

many different identities simultaneously, some of which contradict each other.

I have been trained in undergraduate and graduate programs to be a 'functionalist' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). This has made my identity work complex as I struggle with balancing the rationality and order that I was trained to employ with the uncertainty and contradictions I actually experience. It has only been the last few years that I have come to embrace that who I am is constantly changing and this process is marked by contradictions and uncertainty. Yet, at the same time, I still strive to order my experiences and balance the different resources that shape who I feel I should be (e.g., a kind daughter, a faithful partner, a compassionate friend, a loyal employee, a sensitive co-worker). Through these experiences I have come to understand myself as a subjective individual. By this I mean personal experience is integral to making sense of my place in the world and others in it. There is a historical significance to my lived experiences that arises from various cultural, social, political and economic conditions (Ellis and Flaherty, 1992). At the same time, there is a distinctiveness or individuality about my experiences given the ways in which I engage, resist, accept and struggle with my thoughts, emotions and actions (Ellis and Flaherty, 1992). As such, as a subjective individual I co-construct and constantly re-construct meaning in my life.

So much of my life centers around what I do as paid employment and presently I struggle to sort out how much of who I am is informed by what I do. On the one hand, I think there are no distinct lines between private and public lives. I view my work-based identities as an extension of who I am

outside of work. I encourage students to call me by my first name, I like my students to see me as a person and not a title, and I try to develop friendships at work. On the other hand, I often make conscious efforts to separate myself from what I do outside of paid employment. I often do not tell people what I do for a paid living and try to avoid the topic altogether with new acquaintances. At times, I am concerned with the notion that who I am outside of work is simply an extension of who I am at work. I desire to think that there is more to me than simply my occupational title and wish to separate myself from what I do for paid employment. I also wonder if others in my life (e.g., friends, colleagues, family, students) define me by what I do and if so, to what extent?

For me, identity is a complex process that never seems to be resolved or sorted, despite my desire to do so. Furthermore, paid work plays an integral role in how I understand myself. This is also informed by various considerations (e.g., friends at work, friends and family outside of work, position of work in hierarchy of paid professions). At the same time, constant negotiations with myself, and others about who I am, whether consciously or not, reflect that I am active agent in my identity work. My ongoing identity project has triggered my interest in exploring how others make sense of their identity work, specifically work-based identity, partly in an attempt to make sense of my own experiences.

In many ways, my path in the paid working world has been one of privilege (e.g., white, middle-class background, educated). I do not wish to speak as an authority on the experiences of others, nor do I strive to present the ‘truth’ of work-based identity. My preoccupation with ‘who I am’ and

work-based identity construction, however, has led me to delve deeper into the literature on work-based identity and to research how the subjective individual ‘manages’ processes of identity construction.

1.2. Reconciling Agency and (Re)Sources of Identity Construction

In exploring how individuals make sense of their work-based identities, I draw our attention to individual experience and agency in this process. Organization studies has generally been concerned with organizational identity (cf., Albert and Whetten, 1985; Gioia, Schultz, and Corley, 2000), individual identity as it links to organizational identity (cf., Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995; Scott and Lane, 2000), discourse and identity (cf., Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004; Humphreys and Brown, 2002), identity regulation as organizational control (cf., du Gay, 1996; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002) and social identity (cf., Alvesson, 2000; Chattopadhyay, Tluchowska, and George, 2004). The active role that the individual plays in her identity construction is often overlooked or underplayed in this work (Linstead and Thomas, 2002; Thomas and Davies, 2005). There is, however, a growing body of work on the identity construction of managers and professionals that does shift the focus from wider macro-structural constraints, organization control and social identity to the lived experiences of individuals and their agency in these processes (cf., Ibarra, 1999; Thomas and Linstead, 2002; Watson, 1998; Watson and Harris, 1999). I set out to achieve a similar goal in looking at *how non-management* employees construct, negotiate and sort their identities.

The concept of *agency*, for this research, is interpreted as the struggles in which an individual engages, consciously or otherwise, in choosing to live a particular way (Brewis, 2004). Agency can be seen explicitly through individual's actions and behaviours (e.g., tardiness, quitting job). Agency, however, may also be present even when we cannot 'see' it in observable action. The internal struggles that an individual engages in sorting, processing, challenging and accepting various conditions and decisions she encounters in her life experiences is also understood as agency for this research. These internal struggles often cannot be seen, rather only 'heard' (or read) through individuals retelling their experiences. In exploring how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity, these struggles may be manifested through *multiple identity roles* and the *contradictions* that emerge through her stories. Throughout this research, I use 'agency' rather than 'resistance' to make my contribution to identity at work. Much of the research on resistance focuses upon behavioural aspects of being otherwise, that is, actions we can see. In this research I do not want to restrict my exploration of identity at work to such a narrow conceptualization. As a result, I use 'agency' in this research to explore both what we can 'see' as resistance, as well as the internal struggles that can only be heard through stories.

This research builds upon our understanding of *emotion work*, as coined by Hochschild (1983) and refined by Bolton (2000a, 2005a) and Bolton and Boyd (2003), to theorize *processes of emotion work* as a heuristic for understanding the role of agency in work-based identity. Emotion work for the purposes of this research is understood as the efforts in which an individual engages in working on her thoughts and ways of understanding

herself and others. Emotion work becomes a useful heuristic for exploring the agency involved in identity work as it captures what we can ‘see’ as ‘resistance’, as well as the ‘internal’ efforts of individuals to sort, process, challenge and accept various conditions and decisions in their ‘process of becoming’ (Braidotti, 1994; Watson and Harris, 1999).

To surface these struggles, similar to Watson (1997:141) in his studies of the work-based identity of managers, “I engage in conversations with individuals...with the intention that my questions, comments and challenges offered to the individual in the course of that conversation will prompt them to engage in ‘identity-work’ as they ‘present’ themselves to me – and indeed to themselves”. From such a perspective, the struggles that individuals engage in making sense of their work-based identities emerge as retrospective accounts reconstructed through their present ideas (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002). I acknowledge that the stories of work-based identity discussed in this thesis are co-produced and re-presented retrospectively through my interpretations of the lived experiences expressed by the individuals involved in this research (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000; Thomas and Davies, 2005). While I do not engage in storytelling as a specific methodological or methods choice, I use ‘story’ throughout this research to refer to the conversations of lived experiences with individuals encountered throughout this research.

Moreover, in adopting a social constructivism approach where *experience* is integral to understanding identity, identity is seen to be processual and emergent (Beyer and Hannah, 2002; Chia, 1996; Watson and Harris, 1999). It has been argued that there is still much to be learned about the fluid

nature of identity (Linstead and Thomas, 2002; Raimond, 1999). It is not so much a matter of what one becomes as a final, stable state, rather identity is understood to be an ongoing project characterized by flux, confusion and conflict (Linstead and Thomas, 2002; Thomas and Linstead, 2002). Identity is seen as a process of becoming (Braidotti, 1994; Watson and Harris, 1999). To reduce the uncertainty involved in identity work and construct a positive sense of self, individuals strive to 'order' these experiences through the construction of various identity roles, some of which are more salient than others (Alvesson, 2000; Hall, 2000; Linstead and Thomas, 2002). These identity roles, or categories, "derive their meaning from the broader web of background assumptions, experiences, and understandings shared in a culture", as well as through ongoing individual action that alters the meanings associated with these roles (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002:574). The construction of self-enhancing identity roles to establish a sense of stability, 'order', consistency, familiarity or security in knowing oneself and others, is viewed as the individual's desire for *coherence* in her identity work (Thomas and Davies, 2005; Jenkins, 1996).

In the context of this research I use identity to denote my focus upon what others have referred to as personal identity (e.g., du Gay, 1996; Watson and Harris, 1999). I view identity as a social construction interpreted as who we, and others, think we are in particular contexts (Hall, 2000; Jenkins, 1996). Identity encompasses both self (e.g., bodily attributes, reflexivity, distinctiveness) and social (e.g., group membership) aspects (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Harré, 1998). Identity is manifested through identity roles that enable us to sort through, talk about and make sense of who we, and others are (Hall, 2000). In a way, these identity roles serve as labels that are

mediated through language and broader social codes so that we can make our identities intelligible to others and ourselves (Hall, 2000; Jenkins, 1996). Identity work or identity construction refers to the processes through which meanings about whom we, and others, are, are constructed, negotiated and managed by the individual in relation to various external and internal experiences and pressures (Hall, 2000; Jenkins, 1996). Throughout this research, I use 'identity at work' to emphasize my focus upon identity construction in and around organizational life. In du Gay's (1996) book, *Consumption and Identity at Work*, he uses identity at work in a similar way to refer to the study of work-based identity. Identity at work is used simply to denote the domain of focus for this research, that is, paid work or occupational realms.

Most of the research to date on work-based identity has focused upon one aspect of identity construction, that is, relations with others, organizational control, or broad macro forces (e.g., culture) without exploring the intersections and interactions among these different aspects (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). Building upon the plethora of research on work-based identity that draws upon *social identity*, *identity regulation as a form of organizational control*, *emotion work*, *broad macro considerations*, and *agency*, in this research I explore how the individual makes sense of her identity construction in relation to the various resources that she might draw upon. In doing this, I conceptualize an alternative lens through which we can understand work-based identity whereby both agency and available resources to be drawn upon are integral to understanding an individual's process of becoming. This view of identity is characterized by multiplicity, emergence, complexity and contradiction.

1.3 The Nature of Work and Identity Construction

The relationships between an individual's personal identity and paid work have been a concern for many 20th century researchers exploring modern organization life, implicitly and explicitly (du Gay, 1996). In considering research sites for this exploration, I reflected upon critique offered by various researchers about the narrow range of formal organizations studied in organization studies (Brewis and Linstead, 2000; Jones and Surman, 2002; Parker, 2002; Weick, 1979). Like Alvesson and Willmott (1992:433), I use organization studies and management studies interchangeably to refer to "a field of study that is ostensibly oriented to practical considerations". Elsewhere I argue looking at well-studied topics through alternative lenses offer fresh and different insights on embedded ways of understanding (Grandy and Mills, 2004). In this research, I set out to achieve a similar objective in looking to under-explored sites in organization studies to offer new insights into how individuals make sense of their work-based identity construction.

Organizations, as understood in this research, are a patterned set of reciprocal relationships where certain rule-like ways of behaving are both stable and fluid (Hammond, 1998). My focus is upon formal organizations, that is, social groups where a division of labour is deliberately created in order to achieve specific goals. Organizations are historical entities and exist as a broad collection of social influences that shape society as a whole. They also have both objective and subjective aspects. Organizations are objective in their rule-based and prescriptive ways that can shape behaviour.

At the same time, they are constantly reshaped by conscious human activity, and thus are inherently subjective. The mainstream literature in organization studies tends to emphasize the objective and rational aspect of organization, while overlooking or avoiding the subjective and historical elements (Brewis and Linstead, 2000; Parker, 2002).

Brewis and Linstead (2002) draw attention to sex work as a fruitful, yet relatively unexplored site for management research. Sex work, for this research, is defined as a form of sexual or erotic labour that entails a variety of activities including, prostitution, go-go dancing, stripping, phone sex, pornography video production and dominatrix work (Brewis and Linstead, 2002; Chapkis, 1997; Frenken and Sifaneck, 1998; Maticka-Tyndale, Lewis, Clark, Zubick, and Young, 2000; Weitzer, 2000). The sex industry includes the organizations, workers, managers, owners and customers involved in sex work (Weitzer, 2000). Researchers draw links between mainstream work and sex work in discussions of emotion work, identity and service-based work (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Hochschild, 1983); dirty work and identity (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999); work as networks and discourses intertwined in the production of identities (West and Austrin, 2002); and, organizations as subjective (emotive), historical and objective (Brewis and Linstead, 2000; Hearn and Parkin, 1987).

Sex work can also be seen as a form of 'dirty work' (Hughes, 1958). Dirty work refers to occupations or tasks that are viewed as physically, socially or morally tainted (e.g., garbage collector, funeral directors, prison guards, exotic dancers, bill collectors) (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999). Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) draw upon occupational prestige as a composite of status,

power, quality of work, education, and income to depict the wide scope and variety of dirty work occupations. The commonality is not in the job design or context of these occupations, rather it is in the reaction that such tasks evoke in individuals, “How can you do this?” (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999:415). The stigma of dirty work is transferred to those who perform dirty work so that they in turn are seen and treated as ‘dirty’ (workers). My use of ‘sex work as a form of dirty work’ in this research is problematic as it implies that I am passing judgement and that I accept the marginalized position of sex work, and other forms of work in the paid work hierarchy. This is not the case. I refer to sex work as dirty work throughout this research to denote its use in the extant literature and acknowledge the lived experiences of those I encounter and the narratives of the archival material as I interpret it.

Sex work, that is, dirty work, as a site for organization studies illuminates the subjective, objective and historical aspects of organizing (Brewis and Linstead, 2000). The sexual and emotive aspects of organizations are so vivid in sex work that we, as organizational researchers, have little choice but to confront these aspects of organizational life (cf., Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Hearn and Parkin, 1987; Hochschild, 1983). Furthermore, like other formal organizations, sex work establishments are also guided by rationality, where specialization and formalization are seen to be integral to organizational success. Moreover, sex workers are likely to confront the marginalized place that exotic dancing is seen to hold in the paid work hierarchy (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999; Rubin, 1993). Research into sex work offers a unique opportunity to explore how individuals ‘manage’ the stigma associated with their work-based identities and their desire for

coherence in how they make sense of whom they, and others, are. Brewis and Linstead (2000) contend sex work's position as both bad sex (e.g., outside marriage, commercial) and bad work (e.g., sexual, emotive) is a historical, cultural and political phenomenon that has emerged over time. As such, it illuminates the historical aspect of organizational life and how we need to consider this in organization studies' research.

In a related vein, unsettling the marginalized place of sex work may be more complex than simply redressing legislation, improving workplace protection or changing the ownership structure of the industry. If workers themselves in part sustain the stigma associated with their work, as Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) and Thompson and Harred argue (1992), then unsettling the marginalized place of these workers and other marginalized workers may mean to date organization studies has only begun to scratch the surface in understanding working life for these individuals. In this way, looking at the 'old' issues (in this case identity) in different sites offers us new ways of seeing, understanding and doing. Furthermore, the more we talk about and see alternative sites of study in organization studies, the more we begin to unsettle hegemonic notions of legitimate work and research and open the way for different ways of understanding organizational life.

Overall, in drawing upon the existing literature concerning *identity regulation as a form of organizational control*, *social identity*, *dirty work*, and *emotion work* through this thesis I aim to conceptualize an alternative lens through which organizational researchers can explore not only the agency inherent in identity at work as the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity, but also take into account various resources that

interact and intersect in these processes. Furthermore, by exploring these issues in sex work organizations it opens space to understand the objective, subjective and historical aspect of organizational life.

1.4. Research Parameters

Having re-constructed how my lived experiences inform the research study at hand and the conceptualization of identity to be employed in exploring the subjective individual and her identity at work, below I outline the research questions and research objectives guiding this research, as well as the research site selected for this exploration. This research sets out to contribute to organization studies and our understanding of identity at work by addressing the following research question:

How does the subjective individual make sense of her work-based identity?

To do this several questions will be considered throughout this research:

- How does the individual strive for some sort of coherence or order in her identity construction?
- How do multiple, overlapping, changing, and contradictory identities emerge?
- How does the organization shape, or be shaped by, an individual's identity construction?
- How do relations with others (e.g., co-workers, family, friends) shape, or be shaped by, an individual's identity construction?

- How does the type of work and how that work is viewed in cultural, political and legal milieus shape, or is shaped by, an individual's identity construction?
- How does the individual sort through and struggle with the different resources that play a role in her identity construction?
- What can we learn about identity at work in organization studies by looking at an alternative site of study?

From these research questions, the primary objectives of the research are:

1. To explore how the subjective individual's identity at work can be understood as a process of multiplicity, contradiction and fluidity.
2. To reconcile distinct literatures, that is, emotion work, identity regulation as organization control, social identity, and dirty work, to develop an alternative, more complete lens for understanding identity at work.
3. To explore the different resources (e.g., organizational rules, social relations, position of work in paid work hierarchy) that an individual might draw upon in constructing her work-based identity.
4. To explore how agency emerges through the individual's struggles for coherence amidst the multiplicity and contradiction that may be involved in her identity work.
5. To explore how looking at identity construction for a group of sex workers can offer new insights into understanding identity at work in organization studies.

1.4.1. The Research Site

For the purposes of this research, exotic dancing is defined as a form of sex work that involves either topless or nude dancing (Wesley, 2002). Exotic dancers have been referred to and refer to themselves as strippers, entertainers, go-go dancers, lap dancers and pole dancers (Liepe-Levinson, 2002; McCaghy and Skipper, 1969; Ronai and Ellis, 1989; Skipper and McCaghy, 1970). Exotic dancing clubs have a long history in the United States, however, it was not until the mid 1990s that topless dancing clubs began to emerge in the UK (Bindel, 2004). It is estimated that there are presently more than 150 clubs legally operating throughout the UK (Bindel, 2004). Lap dancing is “one of the fastest growing areas in Britain’s sex industry” (Lap Dancing Contest Cancelled, 2001:1). This growth, however, has been met with a lot of controversy and confusion from regulatory bodies (e.g., granting and monitoring of licenses varies across municipalities), religious groups, women’s rights groups (e.g., Object) and organizing bodies (e.g., International Union of Sex Workers, GMB – Britain’s General Union). In what has been considered the first indepth study of exotic dancing clubs in the UK, Julie Bindel’s (2004) report, *Profitable Exploits: Lap Dancing in the UK*, was commissioned by the Glasgow City Council to explore the nature of these clubs in the UK. Bindel’s (2004) research presents exotic dancing in a rather one-dimensional way by concentrating upon the objectification of women. Bindel, however, does note that further research is needed to understand the industry, the owners, legislation, enforcement and workers. There is limited research on this growing industry in the UK, yet it is an area rich with organizational issues.

Opportunities exist to study issues of gender, health and safety, training, employment protection, tenure, turnover, career development, and identity.

In the exotic dancing industry, gentlemen's clubs are seen to be unique in comparison to other organizations providing exotic dancing services. Forsyth and Deshotels (1997:130) contend gentlemen's clubs may "serve as a vehicle through which stripping will become less deviant". These clubs occupy a position of exclusivity and attempt to present exotic dancing establishments as professional, legitimate, law-abiding businesses, as do the dancers who work in these clubs (Forsyth and Deshotels, 1997). *For Your Eyes Only (FYEO)* is one of the first exotic dancing clubs established in the UK. There are presently five clubs operating under the ownership of the Ladhar Group. The company markets *FYEO* as a gentlemen's club with upscale entertainment and surroundings, "classic entertainment for the modern gentleman" (For Your Eyes Only, 2005). It distinguishes itself from competitors with its policy of escorting customers to their seats, tableside bar service, elaborate and comfortable surroundings, no contact policy imposed upon both dancers and clients, and protection provided to dancers (e.g., escorting dancers to their cars after a shift). Dancers are self-employed, however, *FYEO* has various formal rules (e.g., hours of work, dress code, drinking policies), as well as informal rules (e.g., rigid physical criteria) to which dancers must conform. With nearly a decade of operations in the UK industry, much of which has and continues to be fraught with controversy from various interest groups, and the visible efforts of the club to present itself as a professional, leisure-based business, rather than a form of sex work (e.g., see website www.fyco.co.uk for marketing of the clubs), *FYEO* clubs offer an interesting opportunity to explore how individuals

make sense of their work-based identities amidst various intervening resources.

1.5. Structure of Thesis

In **Chapter One** I have introduced myself to the reader and how my lived experiences inform how I have come to explore the subjective individual and work-based identity. I have provided the grounding for the research that unfolds. I have provided a brief overview of the approach I intend to take in this thesis, the literature I intend to draw upon, the research questions and objectives, and the research site.

Chapter Two provides an overview of conceptualizations of identity to ground the understanding adopted for this work. It also presents key themes in work-based identity as studied in organization studies. Through this discussion gaps in the literature, both theoretical and empirical, are identified. This leads to the discussion of an alternative theoretical lens that reconciles identity regulation as organizational control, dirty work, social identity, and emotion work. I argue such a lens bridges the gaps as presented in the chapter and offers a novel way through which to study work-based identity.

Chapter Three builds upon the literature discussed in Chapter Two to illuminate how sex work is a relevant site for alternative learning in organization studies.

In **Chapter Four** I introduce my methodological and methods choices, challenges and tensions as experienced in this research process. This chapter is presented in the past tense to reflect how I retrospectively make sense of the decisions I have made and the implications of these decisions in understanding work-based identity for myself and the individuals involved in this process.

In **Chapter Five**, I begin to explore some of the resources of identity construction available to dancers in their identity work. I present an overview of *FYEO*, an analysis of the clubs' efforts to create a particular organizational identity, its efforts to regulate dancers' identity work, and the position of exotic dancing as revealed through a one-year newspaper archival search.

In **Chapter Six**, I interpret the stories of dancers and managers employed at *FYEO*, as well as the archival analysis discussed in Chapter Five to make sense of how dancers construct and struggle with their work-based identities. These processes of identity construction illuminate how identity at work 'happens' as a mutually constitutive process whereby the individual plays an active role as she draws upon various resources available to her.

In **Chapter Seven** I make sense of the processes of identity construction as heard (or read) through the stories of dancers, managers and archival analysis in re-presenting how dancers' construct identity roles and a hierarchy of stigmatization to 'manage' their desire for coherence amidst the contradiction and multiplicity inherent in their identity work.

In **Chapter Eight**, I reconcile the extant literature and the empirical material experienced through this research to offer an alternative lens for understanding work-based identity. A discussion of the unique contribution of this research through the theoretical and empirical approaches adopted is presented. Identity is theorized as a complex and messy process whereby the individual actively draws upon various resources of identity construction.

In **Chapter Nine** I reflect upon my research questions and objectives as outlined in Chapter One and the contribution of this research to understanding work-based identity in organization studies. Through a reflexive account of the approach I have employed I explore how this research has become integral to my own process of becoming. In addition, I reflect upon how making different choices throughout the process may have affected the research I present. Moreover, I offer those interested in studying work-based identity in organization studies suggestions for future research that can build upon the approach employed in this study.

1.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided the reader with a background into how my research question, that is, *how does the subjective individual make sense of her work-based identity*, has developed through my lived experiences in understanding how I come to understand myself and others in occupational realms. It has provided the reader with the foundations for my understanding of identity as employed in this research and outlined the theoretical and empirical approaches guiding this research. Furthermore, this chapter has discussed the research parameters of the project and

provided the reader with an overview of the content of chapters to follow. I now move to a more detailed description of the literature review that underpins this research.

Chapter Two

Understanding Identity at Work

2. Introduction

Albert, Ashforth and Dutton (2000:14) contend the dynamics of identity need to be better understood because identity is so “crucial to how and what one values, thinks, feels and does in all social domains, including organizations”. Watson and Harris (1999) contend ‘professional’ or work-based identities inform how we come to understand ourselves, in and outside of work. As organizations expect more from paid workers to satisfy the consumption demands of consumers (du Gay, 1996), understanding the processes through which individuals ‘manage’ these, and other, considerations, while securing a positive sense of self has become a growing concern for researchers in organization studies. The more we ‘know’ about identity at work, the better we can understand organizational life and how it affects those interacting in it. This chapter provides a review of the work-based identity literature to ground the theoretical approach to be used in this research. First, the chapter provides a discussion of what is meant by identity and identity at work. Key themes in the extant literature are then noted to set the parameters of how identity ‘happens’. The literature on work-based identity is organised under the headings macro, meso and micro (re)sources of identity. These (re)sources include broad macro and organizational considerations, as well as relations with others and agency. Following this discussion, an alternative lens for understanding work-based identity that draws upon emotion work, identity regulation as organizational control, social identity and dirty work is proposed.

2.1. Conceptualizing Identity

Identity has been defined in numerous ways. Gergen (2000) defines identity as our ways of understanding who we are, what we are about and how we should perform. Similarly, Alvesson (2000) and Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) contend identity answers the questions, ‘who am I?’, ‘what do I stand for?’, and ‘how should I act?’ on a temporal basis. Jenkins (1996) describes identity as a distinctiveness that presumes consistency or continuity over time and serves as a form of classification. Identity allows individuals to associate themselves with something or someone else. In this way, identity has both self and social aspects. Gecas (1982, in Ibarra, 1999:766) also highlights both the individual and social aspects of identity when describing it as the various meanings attached to a person by self and others. Beyer and Hannah (2002:637) note identity has been used in a variety of ways to refer to self-conception, including, “what people think of themselves (Erikson, 1950), what individuals think others think of them (Cooley, 1902), and the sense of belonging to groups having certain characteristics (Ashforth and Mael, 1989)”. Harré’s (1998) discussion of Self 1, 2 and 3 to depict the different aspects of personhood, is also useful in highlighting the social and self aspects of identity. Throughout this research ‘self’ and identity will be used interchangeably and this may, or may not, reflect the intentions of those researchers I draw upon when using the terms. As I interpret Harré’s (1998) descriptions of Self 1, 2 and 3, there are key aspects integral to capturing a holistic understanding of identity. The individual is seen to be reflexive and “have a sense of one’s point of view, at any moment a location in space from which one perceives and acts upon

the world” (Harré, 1998:4). The individual also possesses a sense of distinctiveness that shifts over time. Moreover, the individual exists in relation to others. How others perceive the individual and how the individual negotiates these impressions play a role in understanding self. Harré (1998:6) does, however, contend ‘identity’ is problematic because it has come to mean a form of categorization to refer to “the group, class or type” to which an individual belongs. As such ‘identity’ depersonalizes the individual, thus jeopardizing the distinctiveness inherent in understanding what he calls “personhood” (Harré, 1998:2).

Drawing upon the above discussion, identity for the purposes of this thesis is defined as who we, and others, think we are in particular contexts (Hall, 2000; Jenkins, 1996). Identity encompasses self and social aspects including, bodily attributes, reflexivity, distinctiveness, and group membership (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Harré, 1998). Identity is manifested through identity roles that enable us to sort through, talk about and make sense of who we, and others, are (Hall, 2000). In a way, these identity roles serve as labels or categories through which individuals and others order and make their experiences intelligible (Hall, 2000, Jenkins, 1996). I am wary, however, of the dangers of ‘fixing’ and excluding individuals through identity roles or categories (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2002; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002; Watson, 1998). As such, identity roles for the purposes of this research are seen to be a sense making heuristic to understand how individuals come to understand themselves and others, temporally and retrospectively.

In providing an overview of the literature on work-based identity, several themes emerge including, the nature of identity as stable, dynamic or both; the singularity or plurality of identity; as well as the subjective versus objective nature of identity. These themes will be discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

The essentialist notion of identity depicts it as fixed, stable and directly observable (Kohonen, 2005). Others have moved away from the singular notion of identity to acknowledge the plurality of identity, however, still contend that despite the multiple identity roles an individual may construct, there is only one 'true' self (cf., Hochschild, 1983). More organization studies researchers are challenging these notions of identity and propose a view that draws upon social constructionism, as well as postmodernism, to depict identity as dynamic, multiple, contradictory (Kohonen, 2005; Thomas and Davies, 2005; Thomas and Linstead, 2002). Furthermore, it is argued that we need to focus more upon the processes of identity construction and the 'how' of identity, rather than the 'what' of identity (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004; Watson, 1998; Watson and Harris, 1999). From this view, identity can be seen to be an ongoing achievement, that is, an emergent, messy process of 'knowing' oneself and others, retrospectively (Thomas and Davies, 2005; Watson and Harris, 1999). Identity is not a matter of what becomes, but the ongoing process of becoming (Braidotti, 1994; Holstein and Gubrium, 2000; Jenkins, 1996; Watson and Harris, 1999). This process involves individual struggles with balancing the desire for coherence in her sense of self, with the complexities of the various resources available for her to draw upon (Brewis, 2004; Denzin, 1989, in Holstein and Gubrium, 2000). Responding to the call for more studies on

how identity happens, this research builds upon the work of the social constructionists to explore identity as a process of becoming, underpinned by coherence, multiplicity and complexity.

Harré (1998) also highlights an important consideration in how we come to understand and study identity. Harré (1998) contends the self is not an objective entity, rather a site from which a person perceives the world and a place from which to act. In tracing the ‘development’ of self, Holstein and Gubrium (2000) draw attention to the subjective aspects of understanding self through embracing individual experience and emotion, as well as to the more objective or physical aspects of understanding self. In this way, the self develops through experience, emotional struggles internal to the individual, embodiment, as well as interaction with other individuals and institutions. Holstein and Gubrium (2000) define self as a social construction and a social structure, reproduced time and again in everyday life. In this research, an emphasis upon the experience of individuals, internal struggles, objectification of self, as well interaction with others are considered when exploring *how* the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity.

Holstein and Gubrium’s (2000) research about the development of self is useful in capturing many of the considerations integral to understanding identity. They begin their work by departing from Descartes philosophical position on identity, that is, ‘I think, therefore I am’, to the work of social psychologists like James (1961[1892]), Cooley (1964[1902]), Mead (1934), Blumer (1969) and Goffman (1959) who highlight the importance of experience, social interaction, plurality, fluidity, reflexivity and process in

conceptualizing identity. Holstein and Gubrium (2000) then move into what they term 'The Dark Side' of self describing how after World War II, several trends in the development of self surfaced the negative side of this process, including the consumption of the individual by social identity, organizational control, and the development of the deviant self. The dark side of self highlights how the individual's distinctiveness is threatened by social or collective identity. Individuals risk becoming lost to social or collective identity, thereby demonstrating the power relations inherent in social identity. This identity regulation is also discussed as a form of organizational control through the development of the 'organizational man', as well as the commercialization of feelings, thereby losing one's 'true' self to the organization. Another aspect of the dark side of identity that Holstein and Gubrium (2000) depict involves the development of the deviant self whereby social circumstances turn the self away from conventional society. Goffman's (1963) work on stigma and the spoiled identity is drawn upon in their discussion of the deviant self. Holstein and Gubrium (2000) also move beyond the dark side of self to offer a discussion of the postmodern self. One version of the postmodern self is depicted through Gergen's (2000) 'saturated self'. This saturated self increasingly fragments and "corresponds to a multiplicity of incoherent and disconnected relationships" where there is no identifiable self (Gergen, 2000:7). Overall, Holstein and Gubrium's (2000) work highlights how the work of social psychologists like James, Mead and Goffman underpin much of the organization studies' research that is beginning to focus upon the *how* of identity or the process of becoming, rather than the *what* one becomes during identity construction. I have drawn upon the social constructionists more than postmodernists because the former allows me to consider both the relativism involved in meaning

making, as well as the realism integral to identity construction. It is my view that postmodernism would not allow me to do this in the way I have for this research.

In conceptualizing identity for this research, I draw upon James' (1961[1892]) emphasis upon the 'empirical' self where experience and reflexivity are integral, Mead's (1934) view of identity as a social structure, Blumer's (1969) focus upon meaning making, Goffman's (1959) emphasis upon interaction and agency, Holstein and Gubrium's (2000) recognition of the multiplicity of self, Brewis (2004) and Denzin (1989) sense of both coherence and complexity, and Braidotti's (1994) and Watson and Harris' (1999) notion of identity as a process of becoming that is understood retrospectively. In this way, identity is explored as a messy process whereby the individual struggles to balance a sense of coherence and positive sense of self amongst multiplicity and flux. Identity work or identity construction refers to the processes through which meanings about how we understand ourselves and others, are constructed, negotiated and managed by the individual in relation to various external and internal experiences and pressures (Hall, 2000; Jenkins, 1996).

My focus is upon individual identity, however, in unravelling the multiple (re)sources that play a role in the individual's identity work, I also consider how organizational identity shapes and is shaped by the individual's identity work. Organizational identity is seen as "that which is central, enduring, and distinctive" about an organization, may be actively constructed by agents of the organization, and interpreted differently by various constituents (Gioia, Schultz, and Corley, 2000:63). In the next section I look closer at the extant

literature to detail some of the (re)sources that *might* play a role in how the individual makes sense of her work-based identity.

2.2. (Re)Sources of Identity Construction

Organization studies has generally been concerned with organizational identity (cf., Albert and Whetten, 1985; Gioia, Schultz, and Corley, 2000), individual identity as it links to organizational identity (cf., Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Scott and Lane, 2000), identity regulation as organizational control (cf., du Gay, 1996; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002) and social identity (cf., Alvesson, 2000; Chattopadhyay, et al., 2004). Through this research, as well as through other work, identity has also been linked, explicitly or implicitly, to discourse, power, resistance, organizational culture and gender. Holstein and Gubrium (2000:161) contend “the self is always built up out of something”. They explore local culture and organizational embeddedness as two such (re)sources that the individual might draw upon in her identity work. Given the plethora of research on identity, similar to Holstein and Gubrium (2000) I have focused my discussion on work-based identity around what I refer to as the (re)sources of identity construction (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004; Holstein and Gubrium, 2000). Re-presenting the extant literature under Macro Resources, including culture and organization, Meso Resources, including relations with others, and Micro Resources, including individual characteristics and agency, I draw upon the themes of identity research noted earlier. These resource areas are not considered distinct from each other in that resources of one kind interact and are influenced by resources of another kind. For example, research that explores the impact of organizational control upon

identity also might also explore the role of social relations in identity construction. Such research could be ‘categorized’ under Macro, as well as Micro Resources of identity construction. These resources come to form ‘rules’ or expectations that control, constrain, guide and define social action and influence how individuals and groups define themselves and others, in, and outside, organizational life (Clegg, 1981; Mills and Murgatroyd, 1991).

2.2.1. Macro (Re)Sources of Identity Construction

There has been considerable research conducted in organization studies that explores the impact of broad social, political and cultural considerations, both structural and ideological, upon organizational, as well individual identity construction. These resources are embedded and historical, yet at the same time they are also constantly shifting (Holstein and Gubrium, 2000). For the purposes of this research, these broad social, political and cultural considerations, as well as organizational efforts are considered possible resources of identity construction for the subjective individual. These macro resources interact with each other as the individual makes sense of her work-based identity. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) contend societal norms, occupational norms, and organizational norms interact to create particular rules of display for service workers. They draw upon narratives from popular press sources like *Business Week* to highlight how the media’s construction and re-presentation of the ‘service ethic’ are attempts “to align the expressive behaviour of service agents with societal expectations” (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993:109). Although there is a plethora of literature that could be explored in this section, I will draw upon the themes of culture, gender, class, occupational categorization and

organization control to illustrate how macro resources are critical aspects in understanding how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity.

du Gay (1996) explores how our consumer culture, that is, a culture where individuals are encouraged to shape their lives by the use of their purchasing power and freedom to choose in markets, means 'consumption' marks individual identity work, inside and outside organizational life. The sovereign consumer discourse pervades how individual workers are encouraged to view their work, that is, as consumers. The notion of consumer is no longer restricted to constituents external to the organization; relations between internal constituents of an organization are also viewed as a part of the consumer model. "Work becomes an arena in which people exhibit an 'enterprising' or 'consuming' relationship to self, where they 'make a project of themselves, and where they develop a style of living that will maximize the worth of their existence to themselves'"(du Gay, 1996:78). du Gay's (1996) work highlights how broader societal discourses, which shift over time, interact with organizational life to guide the individual's work-based identity, as well as to blur the boundaries between private and occupational identity work.

Brewis, Hampton and Linstead (1997) critique how contemporary discourses, in this case gender difference in the West, influence our understanding of ourselves as gendered, in and outside of organizational life. They explore two forms of gender-inappropriate dress, that is, male transvestism and female power dressing, to illustrate the power relations inherent in how we come to understand ourselves as gendered. They depict

a modernist account of the relationship between genders that emphasises particular features distinguishing masculinity from femininity. They do note that the modernist account they depict is not necessarily uniform and shifts over time. Masculinity is associated with logic, objectivity, control, non-emotion, assertiveness, work ethic and progress. On the other hand, femininity is associated with fluidity, openness, sensuality, and emotion. Within this Western discourse of gender difference, the feminine is the 'other' from which 'she' is positioned as different and inferior to the masculine. As such, a gender difference exists as an artificial divide, yet with 'real' effects in how individuals make sense of themselves, in and outside organizational life.

Wicks (2002) draws upon institutional theory to illustrate the processes of identity re-construction in the context of male-dominated work, that is, an underground colliery. He explores how work-based identity 'happens' through a complex network of institutional (re)sources which constrain and guide individual behaviour, although the individual is seen to play an active role in these processes. At the same time, however, his focus is far more upon institutional (re)sources and social relationships, rather than the agency involved in how identity happens. He defines institutions as "regulatory structures, governmental agencies, professions, public opinion and shared meanings (Oliver, 1991), that are able to exert pressure on organizations and their members" (Wicks, 2002: 312/313). He draws upon popular press archives detailing the Westray mine explosion in Nova Scotia, Canada that occurred in 1992, to unravel the 'image' of an underground coal miner as mediated by various institutions, including the organization, government, families of miners, and surviving miners.

In du Gay's (1996), Brewis et al.'s (1997) and Wicks' (2002) work we can see how broader social (re)sources play a role in how organizational life happens and how individuals' make sense of who they are, inside and outside of work. Wicks (2002) also draws particular attention to the type of work performed. He notes how the positioning of occupational categories in broader social realms also plays a role in individual identity construction. Wicks (2002) highlights how coal mining is unpleasant work performed under what most people would consider unpleasant conditions. The physical taint attributed to the work is accompanied by a relatively low level of occupational prestige held by society in general (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999). As 'dirty work' (Hughes, 1958) miners have to exert considerable efforts to construct a positive work-based identity. As such, identity work becomes even more problematic for certain occupational groupings.

Dirty work refers to occupations or tasks that are viewed as physically, socially or morally tainted (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999). What is seen to be 'dirty' is a social construction with historical roots tied to cultural, religious and political ideologies. Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) contend tasks and individuals working in those occupations are evaluated on the subjective basis of purity and cleanliness. This subjective evaluation results in stigma attached to particular occupations and in turn workers in these jobs. Drawing upon the work of Cusack, Jack and Kavanagh (2003), Goffman (1963) and Jones, Frina, Hastorf, Markus, Miller and Scott (1984) for this research, stigma is understood as an emergent property or 'product' of definitional purposes (e.g., physical mark, attribute, characteristic) that through social interaction is regarded as flawed, deviant or inferior. These

discrediting and undesirable associations mean the individual defined by these attributes is “reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one” (Goffman, 1963:3). Stigmatization then is the process in which social meanings of taint / disgust / inferiority come to be attached to categories of behaviour and individuals. Goffman (1963) concludes ‘stigma’ is historical, temporal and malleable through social action.

The perceived undesirability of a particular personal property, and its capacity to trigger off these stigma-normal processes, has a history of its own, a history that is regularly changed by purposeful social action (Goffman, 1963:138).

Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) elaborate upon what Hughes (1958) refers to as physical, moral and social taint of dirty work. Physical taint occurs where an occupation is associated with various human (or otherwise) fluids, waste, and death or performed under dangerous or noxious conditions (e.g., butcher, janitor, exterminator, funeral director, miner, farmhand, dentist). Social taint occurs where an occupation involves regular contact with other stigmatized groups (e.g., social worker, prison guard, police detective, public defender) or when the tasks appear to be subservient to others (e.g., maid, shoe shiner). Moral taint occurs where occupations are associated with sinful activities or intrusive, deceptive or confrontational techniques (e.g., exotic dancer, tattoo artist, casino manager, bill collector, tabloid reporter, telemarketer). Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) distinguish between the different types of taint, but also note that the boundaries between these categories are undoubtedly blurry and many jobs are tainted on various dimensions. Using this typology, individuals associated with the sex industry for example, could be seen to be morally (e.g., sex outside of

monogamous relationships, public), physically (e.g., threat of transferring sexually transmitted diseases, performed in dubious surroundings), as well as socially (e.g., managers and bar staff working with sex workers) tainted under certain conditions.

Thompson and Harred (1992:292) note, “a person’s occupation is one of the most important elements of his or her personal and social identity...consequently, individuals often make a number of judgments about others based upon preconceived notions about particular occupations”. In their exploration they describe techniques employed by exotic dancers to manage the marginalized position of the work they perform, their work-based identities, and the blurring between professional and private identities as a result of the work they perform. In a similar way, Bolton (2005b) explores how gynaecology nursing is tainted, giving it and those working in the occupation the distinction of dirty work(ers). At the same time, she draws upon the gendering experience of nursing, that is, women in women’s jobs carrying out women’s work, to highlight the historical and cultural specific nature of work and the impact it has upon how individuals and groups make sense of their work-based identity. Like Thompson and Harred (1992), Bolton (2005b) focuses upon the individual (and groups’) efforts to manage their work-based identities in this context. A discussion of this surfaces more clearly in Micro (Re)sources of Identity Construction. Furthermore, a more detailed discussion of dirty work, social relations and identity follows under Meso (Re)sources of Identity Construction. The discussion of it here, however, illuminates how the positioning of particular types of work in society in general might serve as a resource for identity construction for individuals. Furthermore, it draws

attention to the potential complexity involved in how an individual maintains a sense of coherence, and thus a positive sense of self, given the occupational prestige of the job they perform. Moreover, it also illustrates the incentive for organizations to interfere in the individual's identity construction so as to manage, conform or challenge the organization's position in a hierarchy of paid work.

Alvesson (2000) and Hochschild (1983) also draw attention to the organization's efforts to regulate individual identity construction. Alvesson (2000) is concerned with social identity and organizational control in knowledge workers. The organization regulates identity in order to attain loyalty in employees. Hochschild (1983) focuses upon the commercialization of feelings in service-based organizations. In this case, the organization is driven to regulate identity to ensure a successful transaction. Both Alvesson (2000) and Hochschild (1983) detail how the organization intervenes in the identity construction of workers to ensure the presentation of the 'right' identity for an authentic performance.

Hochschild's (1983) work on emotional labour and emotion work is particularly useful in teasing out the processes through which organizations and organizational life 'manages' our identities. Her work also draws attention to broader macro forces, such as class and gender, which guide the management of individual workers' feelings. Hochschild, and many drawing on her work (cf., Ashforth and Tomiuk, 2000; Fineman, 2000; Taylor and Tyler, 2000; Tyler and Abbott, 1998), are concerned with problematizing the need to manipulate emotions in order for individuals to survive in their jobs, and thus fulfill organizational objectives. Her focus is

upon feelings and the transmutation of emotion. Identity and identity work are evident in her discussions about the 'real' or 'true' self, however, the link to identity is only implicit. As a result, there is a lot of room for development in theorizing identity through this lens. Others have since begun to explore some of the links between emotional labour, emotion work and identity (e.g., Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Bolton, 2005b). Some of this work will be discussed in the discussion that follows in this chapter.

Hochschild (1983) describes emotional labour as the outward manifestation of feelings to produce particular responses and feelings in others in the public sphere that is sold for a wage or has exchange value. Individuals use particular language and / or produce particular facial expressions or bodily displays to induce the feelings they perceive that others expect of them. In this way, individuals are acting out roles to satisfy the desires of others, in return for which the individuals performing the emotional labour receive some exchange value. The organization requires or expects individual workers to express particular emotions (e.g., empathy for a customer) in order to ensure successful transactions with constituents. The more authentic the performance, the more likely the transaction will be successful. Furthermore, the more an individual identifies with a role or organization the more likely the display will appear authentic (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999). Therefore, there is an incentive for organizations to intervene in the identity work of individuals to ensure an authentic performance and in turn to meet firm-specific goals (e.g., growth, survival). Feeling rules, which serve as standards to indicate to us appropriate emotional responses in particular circumstances, become managerially manipulated and controlled for commercial benefit (Hochschild, 1983).

Constructing a favourable organizational identity is achieved only through constructing individual identities that align with this position. Emotional labour has been drawn upon extensively in exploring the experiences of service-based workers, like airline staff and exotic dancers, and how the transmutation of sensuality occurs (cf., Maticka-Tyndale, Lewis, Clark, Zubick, and Young, 2000; Taylor and Tyler, 2000; Wood, 2000). Transmutations of sensuality refers to feelings usually reserved for personal interactions being employed in public settings for work-related purposes.

Although Hochschild (1983) does not devote much attention to distinguishing between emotional labour and emotion work, she uses emotion work or emotion management to refer to internal activities where an individual attempts to manage her own feelings, boundaries and identities – unwaged work in the private sphere. Hochschild (1983) discusses techniques, that is, surface acting and deep acting through which the individual manages her emotions for organizational purposes and this implies a sense of agency in the processes. My interpretation of her work, however, is that she offers little space for agency. Individual behaviour is dictated by the macro forces, like class, gender and the organization, acting upon the individual. Bolton and Boyd (2003:290) offer a similar critique and conclude Hochschild, “creates an illusion of emotionally crippled actors” who are unable to exert an active role in relationships with management and customers. Bolton (2000a, 2000b, 2005a) and Bolton and Boyd (2003) build upon Hochschild’s work to distinguish between the different types of emotional engagement individuals that may play out in organizational life so as to recognize the agency involved in identity at

work. This typology of emotion work is discussed under Micro (Re)sources of Identity Construction.

Another limitation of Hochschild's work is her conceptualization of the 'self'. Hochschild (1983:19) describes "transmutation of our emotional system" as the processes in which feelings, usually expressed by an individual for private or personal reasons, are used in public for organizational purposes to such an extent that the individual risks losing the signal function of feeling. In this way, individuals risk losing their real capacity to feel as they no longer can distinguish between public selves and what Hochschild refers to as our real or true self. Furthermore, when transmutation is not effective, the individual risks losing the signal function of display, that is, jeopardizes the authenticity required for many transactions in organizational life. For Hochschild this real self is one that is stable and in the requirement of emotional labour, individuals risk losing their real self due to this instability. In turn, they may align themselves with the false self to reduce the level of strain experienced. Guerrier and Adib (2003) critique Hochschild's narrow depiction of the self and argue for a conceptualization of the self that is more fragmented, while also recognizing that individuals seek authentic or true selves across both non-work and work lives. In a similar way, I concur that some identities will be more salient than others and that there is an element of coherence in identity work. At the same time, however, I contend that viewing identity as stable and unitary as Hochschild implies oversimplifies identity and identity construction. Bolton and Boyd (2003) contend Hochschild overemphasizes the divide between public and private performances thereby overlooking the blurring of boundaries between public and private lives and identities. Bolton (2000a)

also contends the individual is capable of possessing multiple identities in her emotion management. Furthermore, Hochschild does not explore the processes through which a sense of stability, or not, occurs for the individual. This is another area where there is room for further development of Hochschild's emotion work.

What is particularly useful about Hochschild's work is her recognition of the macro forces (e.g., organization, class and gender) that play a role in an individual's experiences. This recognition, however, does occur at the expense of theorizing agency. The typology of emotion management described by Bolton (2000a, 2000b, 2005a) and Bolton and Boyd (2003), and discussed under Micro (Re)sources of Identity Construction, moves toward bridging this gap.

Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) conceptualization of identity work as depicted in Figure 2.1, complements, as well as builds upon Hochschild's notion of organizational control in the development of the self. Alvesson and Willmott draw out the insidious nature of organization upon the individual's identity construction, while also recognizing other discursive forces competing in this process. In this process, Alvesson and Willmott represent the self as reflexive. Identity construction and maintenance is interpreted as a process whereby individuals, influenced by various discursive forces, choose to live in particular ways (Brewis, 2004). Competing discourses, some more persuasive than others, provide space for individuals to struggle with who they are, how they define themselves and open up possibilities to do otherwise (Rabinow, 1994; Thomas and Linstead, 2002). In this way, identity is an ongoing project as the individual

struggles to maintain a coherent sense of herself among competing truths informing her thoughts and actions (Brewis, 2004). These struggles represent the agency involved in identity work.

In their work, Alvesson and Willmott (2002) initially acknowledge the micro, meso and macro forces influencing identity work, however, they move away from providing a comprehensive theory of identity work and focus upon identity regulation as a form of organizational control in the development of their framework. At the same time, the nine modes of identity regulation they propose are yet to be empirically tested and serve as a useful medium through which to look at the rules of identity work as ‘imposed’ by the organization.

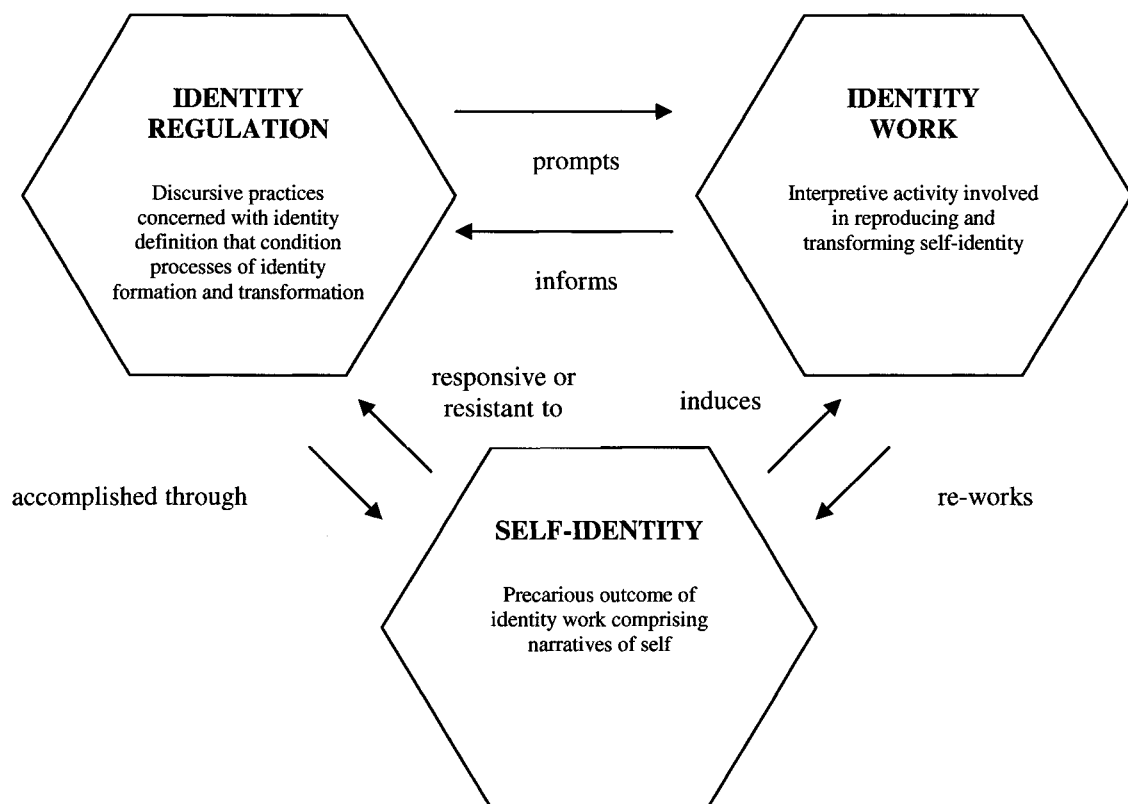


Figure 2.1. Identity Regulation, Identity Work and Self-Identity

Alvesson, M. and Willmott, H. (2002). 'Identity regulation as organizational control: Producing the appropriate individual'. *Journal of Management Studies* 39 (5), 627.

The nine modes proposed by Alvesson and Willmott (2002) are not intended to be exhaustive. These modes include 1. defining the person directly; 2. defining a person by defining others; 3. providing a specific vocabulary of motives; 4. explicating morals and values; 5. knowledge and skills; 6. group categorization and affiliation; 7. hierarchical location; 8. establishing and clarifying a distinct set of rules of the game, and; 9. defining the context. Organizations may *define the person directly* through “explicit references made to characteristics that have some validity across time and space and that distinguish a person from others” (Alvesson and Willmott, 2000:629). These definitions may surface from both the formal (e.g. job titles, performance appraisals) and informal (e.g., aggressive individuals are more likely to hold management positions) aspects of organizational life. Persons or groups may also be identified relative to other individuals or groups, thus *defining a person by defining others*. For example, referring or implying that group A possesses particular characteristics or enacts certain behaviours (e.g., unprofessional) gives group B the privileged position in the dualism, even without explicitly communicating that group B is professional. Group B is defined as professional simply by defining group A as unprofessional. In this way it allows group B to accept conditions that might otherwise be considered negative or even stigmatized. This ‘othering’ is supported by social identity theories. This is also similar to social comparisons described later in managing the spoiled identity. Management may enact an interpretive framework through which employees are encouraged to understand the meaning of their work. By *providing a specific vocabulary of motives* evident through various manifestations of culture (e.g., stories, rituals,

rewards) the organization attempts to create an ideal through which employees can position themselves. In a similar vein, manifestations that *explicate morals and values* may orient an individual towards particular subject positions. Those that conform are less likely to experience dissonance from others in the organization or within subcultures in the organization. *Knowledge and skills* are another means through which organizations attempt to regulate identity. Education and professional affiliation are persuasive tools of identity construction. *Group categorization and affiliation* into social categories is another way through which the individual may identify her / himself in the organization. The consequences of this are similar to defining a person by defining others or through social comparisons. In effect, by othering individuals or groups position themselves in more positive light than other individuals or groups. *Hierarchical location* can also be used as a medium of organizational regulation of identity. In this way the social positioning and relative value of individuals and groups are defined by formal and informal structural arrangements. Alvesson and Willmott (2002) also contend *establishing and clarifying a distinct set of rules of the game* generate norms about the natural way to do activities in particular contexts. While they do note that these rules are not values, morals, or vocabulary of motives, but a network of meanings to offer guidance, the limited discussion they provide on all three of these modes of regulation offers little real distinction between them. The ninth mode they refer to as *defining the context*. Making an effort to describe the environment and the type of people who work in it, the organization can invoke particular identities for workers. This positioning of the organization (e.g., market leader) can reflect upon the individuals

working in the organization and how these individuals come to understand themselves (e.g., successful career).

2.2.1.1. Summary of Macro (Re)Sources

Overall, the modes as discussed by Alvesson and Willmott (2002) are useful in providing a systematic means through which to explore how identity regulation is practiced, more so than Hochschild's (1983) original discussion of emotional labour / emotion work. The modes also complement Bolton and Boyd's (2003) typology of emotion management, specifically in pecuniary and prescriptive emotion management, discussed later.

Unfortunately, Alvesson and Willmott (2002), however, do not go far enough in describing how the self as reflexive emerges through these modes of regulation. In addition, they do not explicitly explore the role social relationships play in identity construction. Furthermore, they provide limited insight into how broader forces (e.g., political, social) or even internal political forces (e.g., ownership structure, leadership, strategic decisions) develop and actually interact or influence the activities of the organization in its attempts to regulate identity through these nine modes. For example, are some organizations more likely to intervene in identity construction than others? Why? Are there greater incentives or risks for some organizations than others in regulating identity? How does the organization interpret these pressures and how do these pressures feed into these modes of regulation? These questions are left unanswered in their work. Ashforth and Kreiner's (1999), Bolton's (2005b) and Thompson and Harred's (1992) work on dirty workers and identity fused with Alvesson

and Willmott's (2002) work provides an opportunity to address some of the limitations of Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) research and develop a more complete picture of identity work.

2.2.2. Meso (Re)Sources of Identity Construction

Jenkins (1996), Mead (1934) and Goffman (1959) all emphasize how identity is very much a social structure, developed through interaction with others. Work-based identity research that explores meso resources of identity construction tends to concentrate upon social networks and the negotiation and conformance within these networks.

Social identity theory, social categorization theory and self-verification theory explain how individuals classify themselves and others into various social categories and how an individual's identity is informed in part by the groups to which she belongs (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). These social categories may be based upon the organization, occupation, religion, gender, or age. These theories view the individual's identity, and that of others, as relational and comparative. According to these theories, our identities are developed, supported and challenged by our relations with others. Social categorization is seen to provide 'order' to our social environment by allowing a means through which to systematically define and position oneself and others (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). This 'ordering' highlights the individual's desire to maintain some sense of coherence in identity construction. Creating groups and negotiating memberships into these groups allow an individual to develop a sense of belonging (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). As social identities, categorization is as much determined

by others as it is by the individual. As a result, these theories often focus upon the collective and social aspect of identity at the expense of individual agency.

Both social identity theory and social categorization theory assume individuals enter or are categorized into particular groups to enhance or shape self-views (Swann, Polzer, Seyle, and Ko, 2004). Social identity theory focuses upon how group membership is related to self-esteem and self-enhancement (Hogg and Terry, 2000). Individuals negotiate membership into groups that will enhance their salient identities, although the membership to some groups may not always represent a positive image to others. Social categorization theory builds upon social identity theory in that it too looks at how self-esteem is a motivator or consequence of social identification. Social categorization theory, however, also draws attention to how group membership is as much about reducing uncertainty as it is about enhancing self-esteem (Hogg and Terry, 2000). Drawing upon social categorization theory to understand identity we can see how memberships into groups depersonalizes the individual so that the individual is no longer unique, rather an embodiment of the group (Hogg and Terry, 2000). With both social identity theory and social categorization theory, the flow is from the group to the individual, that is, the group shapes self-views (Swann et al., 2004). Furthermore, social identity theory and social categorization theory draw our attention to othering as a mechanism to enhance self-esteem or reduce uncertainty. Individuals and groups create a more positive self-view for themselves and their group by favourably comparing themselves to other groups (Chattopadhyay et al., 2004). 'Othering' has been explored by various identity researchers in organization studies (cf., du

Gay, 1996; Hall, 2000; Thomas and Linstead, 2002) that draw upon social identity theory and social categorization theory, explicitly or implicitly. In securing a positive identity, individuals and groups constantly negotiate their membership and the status of the group, relative to other groups. The status of groups may be a function of group, organizational or societal promotion or weighting of particular attributes. Identity construction can be problematic for lower status category members as they have to find ways through which to positively differentiate themselves or change the value ascribed to the group attributes, actively compete with other groups to elevate the group's position or negotiate membership into other, higher status categories (Chattopadhyay et al., 2004).

Coupland's (2001) research on the processes of work-based identity for a group of organizational newcomers encouraged to talk about their work highlights the complexity involved in identity work, as the individual struggles with negotiating group membership, while also constructing a distinct sense of self. She discusses how some newcomers draw upon their social networks at work to re-present themselves as similar to their peer groups, while at other times they separate themselves from the group to construct uniqueness in their sense of self. Coupland's (2001) research indicates that identity is constructed during and for interaction, whereby the individual draws on the other to construct a more favourable sense of self. Her work also illuminates the contradiction and complexity involved in identity construction as individuals strive to balance the need for social identity and self-identity.

Social verification theory also seeks to understand the role of social networks in identity construction (Swann et al., 2004). Social verification theory, however, allows more room for seeing the individual as active in group selection and her experiences within those groups. It views identity construction as a process whereby individuals negotiate group membership and experiences to confirm their identities, rather than the group generating these identities. The flow is from the individual to the group, unlike with social identity theory and social categorization theory, where the flow is from the group to the individual (Swann et al., 2004). The individual's identities may be supported by the groups she chooses to be a part of or inform the experiences in that group in order to verify the identities that are most salient to her.

Coupland (2001) also surfaces the risk involved in an individual's attempt to construct uniqueness given the social aspects inherent in identity work. She notes, "someone who is different to others runs the risk of being considered deviant" (Coupland, 2001:1113). As noted earlier in this chapter, Holstein and Gubrium (2000) discuss how social circumstances can turn the self against conventional society. They draw upon Becker's (1973) labelling theory to describe how social groups create deviance by making rules whose violation of those rules constitutes deviance. When these rules are applied to particular individuals, those that do not conform become labelled as outsiders. Similarly, Goffman's (1963) work on stigma, discussed in the previous section on Macro (Re)sources of Identity Construction, highlights the challenge of managing a 'spoiled identity'.

Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) focus upon social identity theory to demonstrate how dirty workers' identities are informed by the perception of others. They note that the development of strong subcultures may provide the social resources to counteract broader discursive forces in which the occupation is embedded. These subcultures or availability of alternative subject positions may arise from reverse discourses circulating or individuals' attempts to create alternative subject positions. Collectivities may attempt to assert the positive value of the work, or justify the work, when confronted with claims to the contrary (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999; Scott and Lyman, 1968; Thompson and Harred, 1992). Coupland (2001) notes the risk associated with distinctiveness and deviance, while Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) look at how categories of workers labelled as deviants manage the stigma associated with being an outsider by re-constructing their work-based identities as self-enhancing.

Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) propose dirty workers manage their spoiled identities through negotiating the meanings attributed to the dirty work. This negotiation can be seen in attempts to minimize, neutralize and reframe the work they perform. Coupled with this, dirty workers may also exert great efforts to construct and maintain separate professional and private identities to control the scope of their spoiled identities. Furthermore, dirty workers may justify their positions or set themselves apart from other dirty workers. Through *reframing*, *recalibrating* and *refocusing* dirty workers attempt to modify the meanings of stigmatized work while also devaluing the negative meanings attached to the work (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999). The lower the occupational prestige of the job, however, the less likely the successfulness

of repositioning the dirty work in broader arenas (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999).

Reframing involves an attempt to directly transform the meaning attached to the stigmatized work. 'Infusing' is a reframing technique that involves injecting positive value to the job in an attempt to transform the stigma from that which is negative to positive. Thompson and Harred (1992), while concentrating more upon the level of the individual, rather than group, note that exotic dancers will often reframe their job as a form of entertainment, therapy (e.g., by allowing clients to act out their fantasies), or education (e.g., make society more comfortable with nudity and bodies) in an attempt to present their work as legitimate in some way. 'Neutralizing', another reframing technique, involves negating the negative value associated with the job through "denial of responsibility", "denial of injury", "denial of victim", "condemning the condemners" or "appeal to higher loyalties" (Sykes and Matza, 1957:668). To neutralize the stigma individuals may deny responsibility and assert they are simply doing their job, thereby dismissing their association with the stigma attached to the job. For example, bill collectors claim angry debtors project disgust of themselves onto the dirty worker (Sutton, 1991). Individuals may also deny that there are negative consequences experienced as a result of their performance of the job, in this way no harm is done and thus the stigma is unwarranted. Exotic dancers will sometimes emphasize the fantasy element of their jobs to reflect how what they do is not real and simply harmless fun (Thompson and Harred, 1992). Denial of injury is often coupled with creating 'social comparisons' between and within groups (i.e., othering). Exotic dancers compare their work to the taint associated with selling narcotics or stealing

to neutralize the stigma attached to their jobs (Thompson and Harred, 1992). Individuals may also negate the stigma by focusing upon the perceived victim and assert that the affected parties of their actions actually deserve or desire their fate. Ritzer and Walczak's (1986, in Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999) research indicates pimps believe women seek security and in turn are willing to exchange their bodies for this protection. Dirty workers may also 'condemn the condemners' in an attempt to neutralize the stigma attached to their work and transfer the stigma to the condemners. Thompson and Harred (1992) discuss how exotic dancers express resentment and disgust for clients. Dancers note the hypocrisy of clients' actions in that clients frequent the clubs and then condemn the industry and dancers in their lives outside the clubs. By projecting the taint onto condemners dirty workers attempt to negate the stigma of their work and blame those that they see [re]creating this stigma. Dirty workers may also neutralize stigma by contending they violate norms to benefit others (e.g., dancing in order to provide for a child) and in this way they 'appeal to higher loyalties' to deflect the stigma from their sense of self (Thompson and Harred, 1992).

Recalibrating involves shifting the value of job components so that more value is placed upon certain aspects of the job while minimizing other, more tainted aspects. Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) draw upon Palmer's (1978) work on dogcatchers to demonstrate how dogcatchers create a value hierarchy among the components of the job. Calls about possible rabies are valued more positively because such responsibilities serve to protect society from real danger, while calls about strays are viewed less positively. In this way, the dirty workers can recall and magnify positive elements of their jobs and minimize the value of less positive, or more stigmatized elements.

Refocusing involves redirecting attention to nonstigmatized features of the dirty work so as to actively overlook the stigmatized attributes. Dirty workers may refocus upon the levels of pay earned, flexible work hours, the temporality of the job until other opportunities arise, or the use value of the job in creating opportunities for 'better' jobs (e.g. making contacts) so as to redirect attention to the nonstigmatized elements of the jobs, thereby making the dirty work more legitimate. It is important to also note that individuals may use a combination of these reframing, recalibrating or refocusing techniques to justify their work as less dirty or legitimate in [re]constructing their sense of selves.

Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) do not problematize the position of particular types of work as dirty or deviant. It is as if the position of these jobs and the workers employed in them are an accepted truth in society and organizational life. Nor do they challenge the pervasive nature of organization regulation in this process of identity construction. As I see it, organizations considered dirty also have an incentive to position the organization in a more favourable light so as to control the impact that the stigma may have upon organizational success. The organization may attempt to regulate employee and even customer behaviour in order to secure its positive place. In this way, both individuals and organizations may strive to negotiate meanings in response to larger societal influences (e.g., sex work as immoral, unsafe). Organizations will also have firm-specific goals it strives to achieve in order to grow, survive and compete. In achieving these objectives, the organization will expect employees to conform to particular roles (e.g., demonstrate concern for customer well-

being). The more authentic employees are in displaying these roles, the more likely the transaction between the organization and the customer (or other stakeholders) will be completed successfully.

Furthermore, as I interpret it, dirty workers' efforts to negotiate the stigma associated with their work and their sense of self can be interpreted as a form of emotion work. Individuals engage in these activities in an attempt to manage their internal feelings as they struggle with private and public boundaries. Their efforts also serve to balance the need to meet organizational expectations (e.g., empathize with customers), while also securing a positive sense of self and reducing uncertainty. The extent to which the organization is affected by the stigma, and in turn, intervenes in the regulation of identity construction of workers, however, is left unanswered by Ashforth and Kreiner (1999). The stigmatized position of dirty work may mean that identity work for some types of organizing is more problematic than for other occupations. Moreover, Ashforth and Kreiner's (1999) work is limited to drawing out how groups negotiate their position relative to other groups in enhancing self-esteem. Further development of self-identity in understanding these processes would prove insightful. Overall, these considerations posit dirty works as a particularly interesting site to further explore the intersections between identity, stigma and work, as well as the multiple resources that might play a role in this complex process.

Ashforth and Humphrey's (1993) work also draws upon social identity theory in reconciling emotional labour and identity theory in service roles. They interpret emotional labour as a form of "impression management"

(Goffman, 1959:208) whereby the individual deliberately attempts to present herself in a particular way to match social perceptions of herself and maintain specific interpersonal climates (e.g., relaxed and friendly environment). They draw on social identity theory to position identity construction of the individual in relation to others, while also highlighting the paradox of identity work. Individuals struggle with their desire to align their identities to that of salient groups while also preserving a sense of distinctiveness. By doing this, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) also acknowledge the potential for agency, without naming it as such, in identity work more so than Hochschild. In conceptualizing identity construction in this way, they shift attention away from Hochschild's view of identity as stable and singular.

Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) also conceive emotional labour as particularly applicable to understanding identity construction in service work and workers. Service encounters depend upon the behaviour of the service agent. Given the tendency that front-line service personnel represent the organization to various constituents (e.g., customers, suppliers), the face-to-face element of the encounters, the unpredictability of the interactions given the customer participation required in the transaction and the intangibility of the encounter the organization is in a particularly vulnerable position in ensuring the success of the transaction and thus has an incentive to intervene to guide this process. Both Hochschild (1983) and Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) use sex workers (e.g., strippers, prostitutes) as an example of service workers that are susceptible to emotional labour and thus emotion work. Service work is viewed as a performance where service workers are indeed required to be on stage, figuratively and literally.

In this way, the similarities between sex work and service work in general materialize.

2.2.2.1. Summary of Meso (Re)Sources

Overall, social identity theory, social categorization theory and social verification theory all provide significant insight into understanding how our identity construction does not develop in isolation from the social networks that surround us. Social identity theory and social categorization theory are particularly helpful in isolating the self-enhancement and uncertainty reduction elements of identity construction. These theories also allow us to see how identity construction is both dynamic and static. It is dynamic in the sense that our identities and membership to certain groups are marked by an ongoing process of negotiation. At the same time, the individual strives for some sense of order or stability. The individual uses categorization as a means through which to define herself and others, thus offering some means of order and regulation in identity work. Social identity theory and social categorization theory also demonstrate how identity construction can be problematic. In securing a positive position for the group there has to be an other from which to compare. Social identity will only be enhanced if the other is positioned as inferior in some way to the group. Social identity theory and social categorization theory also recognize that individuals' social identity may be derived from various groups (including the organization) and that individuals may have multiple identities. Social verification theory adds explanatory power to understanding social identity through its recognition that the individual may play a larger role in this process, that is, more than either social identity

theory or social categorization theory does. Social verification theory contends the individual informs the identity of the group, rather than the group informing the individual. Together social identity theory, social categorization theory and social verification theory offer useful insight into understanding the process of identity construction, but lack attention to exploring how self-identity and social identity fuse to develop identity at work.

2.2.3. Micro (Re)Sources of Identity Construction

In addition to macro and meso resources available to the individual to draw upon in making sense of her work-based identity, some attention has been drawn to the micro resources available to individuals. These micro resources refer to the efforts of individuals to resist, negotiate and struggle with constructing a sense of coherence and distinctiveness in who they think they, and others, are.

Numerous work-based identity researchers acknowledge that the individual plays a role in identity construction. Most of this work implies, directly or indirectly, that other macro or meso resources play a more dominant role in how work-based identity happens. Agency is limited by pervasive cultural or organizational resources or downplayed in relation to the importance of social relations in understanding identity construction. Ibarra (1999) explores work-based identity as processual in nature for a group of newcomers, that is, junior consultants and investment bankers. She describes how individuals experiment with ‘provisional selves’ or temporary selves in the development of their professional identities. In

doing this, she concludes agency plays a significant role in work-based identity, although this occurs “within the constraints of well-defined occupational norms” (Ibarra, 1999:782). Thomas and Linstead (2002:87) go further to challenge the passive role that individuals are assumed to play in their own identity work and argue for a theoretical framework that “can accommodate both diversity and voice”. They adopt a social constructionism methodology to explore *how* middle managers construct their identity temporally and retrospectively. Identity is viewed as an ongoing accomplishment whereby these managers actively construct their identities through discourse. Thomas and Linstead (2002) present a complex picture of work-based identity, one marked by multiplicity, flux, and contradiction, where the individual strives for a sense of coherence within a network of power relations. They call for more studies that embrace the complexity and confusion inherent in identity work and note, “we should be asking ‘not what has become of middle management?’, but ‘how are middle managers becoming?’ (Thomas and Linstead, 2002:89). To draw out the agency involved in identity work and the processual nature of this, more researchers are focusing upon ‘how’, rather than the ‘what’, of identity through a social constructionist methodology (cf., Beyer and Hannah, 2002; Coupland, 2001; Thomas and Davies, 2005; Watson and Harris, 1999).

As noted earlier, Thompson and Harred (1992) also explore individual efforts to resist, challenge and negotiate a more favourable work-based identity. In a manner similar to Ashforth and Kreiner (1999), whose focus is upon social networks, Thompson and Harred (1992) explore techniques exotic dancers employ to manage stigma associated with their work (e.g., dividing up the social world, neutralization). Both Ashforth and Kreiner

(1999) and Thompson and Harred (1992) draw upon Sykes and Matza's (1957) theory of techniques of neutralization to do this. In addition to the techniques described under Meso (Re)sources of Identity Construction, 'dividing up the social world' is another technique that can be employed in 'managing' *spoiled identities* (Thompson and Harred, 1992). Through controlling information individuals divide up the social world to manage the stigma. The discrediting information is only shared with a small group of people so that other social arenas of the individual's life are unexposed to the information of the dirty work. In this way, an individual feels they can contain the stigma to certain areas of their lives while allowing them to live other unspoiled identities in other parts of their social world. Unfortunately, like Ashforth and Kreiner (1999), Thompson and Harred (1992) make no real attempt to challenge the marginalized place that exotic dancing as a stigmatized occupation holds.

In response to their critique of Hochschild's (1983) lack of attention devoted to agency in conceptualizing emotion work, recently, Bolton (2000a, 2000b, 2005a) and Bolton and Boyd (2003) have extended Hochschild's work by exploring emotion work as a multi-dimensional concept. With an agenda to highlight how individuals are active in emotion work they present a framework with four types of emotion work including, pecuniary emotion management (emotion management for commercial gain), presentational emotion management (emotion management according to general social rules), prescriptive emotion management (emotion management according to organizational / professional rules of conduct) and philanthropic emotion management (emotion management given as a gift). This framework attempts to capture the different sources of feeling

rules (i.e., commercial, professional, social), as well as different motivations for engaging in emotion work. This typology of emotion management is reproduced in Figure 2.2. Their view of emotion work depicts how actors, while constrained by organizational structures, are still capable of possessing multiple identities, as well as choosing to live in particular ways.

2.2.3.1. Summary of Micro (Re)Sources

In addition to drawing attention to agency in emotion work, Bolton's (2000a, 2000b, 2005a) and Bolton and Boyd's (2003) research has the potential to highlight the various discursive considerations that might play a role in an individual's identity work. Bolton (2000a, 2000b, 2005a) and Bolton and Boyd (2003), however, do not discuss the historical and cultural specifics of these professional, organizational and social feeling rules. Furthermore, they mostly focus upon the types of emotion work, rather than the *processes* of emotion work. Coupled with this, their agenda is not explicitly driven by work-based identity concerns. The framework they present is useful as a starting point in linking the processes through which individuals 'manage' their boundaries and feelings. Coupled with the research of Thomas and Linstead (2002), Thompson and Harred (1992), Ashforth and Kreiner (1999), as well as the other work highlighted in this chapter, Bolton and Boyd's (2003) research surface the various (re)sources an individual might draw upon in making sense of her work-based identity. Overall, the work of these researchers is useful starting places to build upon our understanding of agency in identity at work.

	Pecuniary	Prescriptive	Presentational	Philanthropic
Feeling rules	Commercial	Professional Organizational	Social	Social
Associated Motivations	Instrumental	Altruism Status Instrumental	Ontological Security Conformity	Gift

Figure 2.2. Bolton and Boyd's Typology of Emotion Management

Bolton, S. C. and Boyd, C. (2003). 'Trolley dolly or skilled emotion manager?'. Work, Employment and Society 17 (2), 295.

2.3. Developing an Alternative Lens for Understanding Work-Based Identity

Despite the plethora of research on work-based identity and the different resources individuals can draw upon in making sense of who they think they, and others, are, most identity research looks at only one aspect of this complex process. Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003:1165) note, "the literature typically concentrates on a limited element of identity, how social groups or organizational belongingness informs identity, without trying to assess this in relationship to other elements of the individual's identity work". Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) also call for researchers to understand identity as a system of interacting parts comprised of micro, meso and macro elements. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993), however, do not operationalize or problematize the relations among these resources and how these resources shape or are shaped by the individual. I aim to address these limitations by offering a more complete picture of *how* identity at work 'happens'. This thesis sets out to pay particular attention to the individual and how she makes sense of her work-based identity retrospectively. In this regard, the individual is seen to be subjective where experience underpins the process of becoming (Braidotti, 1994; Watson and Harris, 1999). Identity is a social construction characterized by multiplicity, flux,

confusion, contradiction, as well as a desire for coherence. Moreover, this research also sets out to explore how identity construction can be understood as an complex, interactive, mutually constitutive process whereby macro, meso and micro resources are drawn upon, resisted and negotiated (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Downing, 2005). To do this, I reconcile the literatures on emotion work, identity regulation as a form of organizational control, dirty work and social identity.

Although Hochschild (1983) does not devote much attention to distinguishing between emotional labour and emotion work, there is more room to surface agency in her discussion of emotion work. She uses emotion work or emotion management to refer to internal activities where an individual attempts to manage their own feelings, boundaries and identities, that is, unwaged work in the private sphere. I interpret the private sphere in this case to mean the physiological, psychological and social aspects of the individual. I do not mean private in the sense of domains outside of paid employment. Emotion work then involves the exercises in which an individual engages in working on her soul, thoughts and ways of understanding herself and others, not necessarily for commercial use, although it may occur within organizational boundaries. It is here that the struggles an individual might experience in reconstructing identity at work and beyond the boundaries of work come to light. I am interested in the struggles that the individual engages in and how the individual ‘manages’ these experiences. Emotional labour for my research is seen to be a form of emotion work that is manifested through behavioural responses (e.g., observable facial or bodily displays). In emotional labour, organizational or social rules, which inform or are informed by the individual, are negotiated

or conformed to for ‘commercial’ benefit. Commercial benefit in this sense applies to both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations that have obligations to various constituents. For example, healthcare providers may not be profit driven, but patients would have particular expectations about service quality and delivery that the organization (theoretically at least) would need to meet in order to survive. This commercial benefit may serve the organization, individual or other organizational constituent.

Similar to Thomas and Davies (2005) who offer a complex and multidirectional interpretation of resistance, I interpret agency as the struggles in which an individual engages, consciously or otherwise, in choosing to live a particular way (Brewis, 2004). Agency can be seen through actions and behaviours (e.g., tardiness, quitting job). It may also occur through the individual’s emotional efforts to sort, process, challenge and accept various conditions and decisions. In this way, agency may be present even when it is not manifested through observable action. My focus is not upon ‘resistance’, however, interpreting agency in this way means where agency ‘exists’, ‘resistance’ is a part of it.

This scope of this research does not entail problematizing the nature of ‘emotion’, however, I acknowledge there is a plethora of perspectives that inform understandings of emotion (e.g., interactionist, organismic, social constructionist) (Bolton, 2005a; Hochschild, 1983; Fineman, 2003). For the purposes of this thesis, I draw upon Bolton’s (2005a) understanding of emotion as a social ‘thing’ that is a lived, interactional experience within biological, cultural and social spheres. Emotion has a physiological basis, but also involves conscious experience that is negotiated through

interactions with others and is mediated through various cultural considerations.

Beginning with the recognition that there is a physiological basis for emotionality...a balance ought to be found between emotion as an agential experience and emotion as a cultural artefact, or in broader terms, a view that neither reduces structure to agency or agency to structure (Bolton, 2005a:69).

Bolton (2005a) reconciles labour process analysis and Goffman's interactionist view to account for the interplay between agency and structure in understanding emotion and emotion work. She draws upon labour process analysis to depict the structural conditions (e.g., political, economic) of capitalist labour processes that establish expectations that the individual, upon entering paid organizational life, is required to comply with organizational prescription. Labour process analysis, however, contends control under these circumstances is never complete. Conflict is integral to this view and as a result there is room to develop the potential for individual agency to managerial control. To more clearly illuminate the potential for agency in understanding emotion and work, she draws upon Goffman's (1967) view of the individual as a social actor. The individual is created through the various contextual conditions in which they exist, while at the same time the individual possesses the capacity to interact with others and be involved in their own 'self-production'. In this way, emotion exists through interplay between structure and action, occurring dynamically in cultural, social and individual realms.

Hochschild's (1983) work also draws attention to the macro resources, that is, organization, class and gender, which play a role in an individual's

experiences. Alvesson and Willmott (2002), however, also pay close attention to the historical and cultural specific considerations in identity construction. To a certain extent, Alvesson and Willmott (2002) reconcile both social and self-identity aspects of identity, something absent in Hochschild (1983) and Ashforth and Humphrey's work (1993). Bolton (2000a, 2000b, 2005a) and Bolton and Boyd's (2003) framework also has the potential to do this through their identification of professional and social feeling rules and their commitment to agency, yet their agenda is not guided by understanding identity construction. As a result, theorizing identity as both social and self-identity is unexplored. In Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) work, social identity has the potential to emerge through various societal discourses, as well as the organization's attempts to categorize individuals into groups related to its objectives (e.g., functions, job titles, gender). They note regulation is not limited just to individuals, but also can be directed towards groups. Coupled with this, self-identity is clearly illuminated as an integral component to this process. Thus, agency and the self as reflexive become possible. Furthermore, as if in response to Ashforth and Humphrey (1993), Alvesson and Willmott (2002) also offer the potential to theorize identity as a system of interacting resources (e.g., organizational, social). As a result, in this research Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) modes of identity regulation as organizational control are coupled with emotion work, dirty work and social identity as a useful heuristic for understanding how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity.

2.4. Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of the extant literature on work-based identity to ground the theoretical approach adopted for this research on how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity. Various macro, meso and micro (re)sources that the individual might draw upon in her identity work were discussed and critiqued. The extant literature to date, however, offers only a partial picture of identity at work through its focus upon one or two aspects while overlooking the intersections and interactions among these aspects. Building upon this literature, this research sets out to offer a more complete picture of identity at work through developing an alternative lens for understanding work-based identity that fuses emotion work, identity regulation as a form of organizational control, social identity and dirty work. In this way, the agency, as well as various resources the individual might draw upon is illuminated.

In this chapter I also argued that context is important in understanding work-based identity. By this I mean that the type of work performed and how it is positioned in the paid work hierarchy in society, as well as the organization's efforts to create a particular organizational identity can offer insights into how the individual comes to understand her own identity and that of others. To further illuminate the messiness and complexity involved in how an individual 'manages' these resources, an exploration into occupations with low levels of occupational prestige offer a fruitful opportunity to contribute to our understanding of work-based identity. Given stigma is a historically and culturally specific phenomenon; dirty work occupations become 'ideal' sites from which to explore the interacting

resources at play in identity construction. In the next chapter, sex work is proposed as an alternative site for studying work-based identity so as to illuminate new ways of seeing issues relevant to organization studies.

Chapter Three

Sex Work as a *Sight* for Organization Studies

3. Introduction

Many scholars have challenged the notions of organizing and organization as enacted by dominant discourses in organization studies. This is not a new critique (cf., Weick, 1979). There has been, however, a renewed interest in this critique. In 2001, Keele University organized a workshop titled *After Organization Studies* to explore the need for a critique of organization studies (Jones and Surman, 2002). In 2002, the European Group for Organization Studies (EGOS) conference also held a doctoral workshop on research frontiers in organization studies (Antoft, Lundback, and Weber, 2003). Both sessions critiqued the notion of organizations as objective, formal entities and argued for broader interpretations of organization and organizing. This chapter sets out to explore the need for alternative ways of understanding, doing and studying organizational life so as to embrace the objective, subjective and historical aspects of organizing. In doing this, this chapter argues sex work, as a form of dirty work, offers an opportunity to see work-based identity in different ways, as well as to explore the sameness and difference of sex work and other forms of work. There has been some research that links sex work and organization studies; however, this research is rare. Furthermore, very little of this extant literature focuses upon identity specifically and how the nature of organizing might play a role in identity construction. To build upon the extant literature in both sex work and organization studies, first, this chapter discusses how organization studies has a tendency to concentrate upon the stable, objective and non-

emotive side of organizational life, while overlooking the ambiguities, as well as the historical, yet temporal nature of organizing. Second, this chapter posits sex work as an interesting and novel site for organization studies to capture the objective, subjective, as well as historical aspects of organizing. Furthermore, sex work as a form of dirty work, draws attention to the meaning making processes inherent in identity construction and the messiness of making sense of ourselves and others, in and around organizational life.

3.1. The Nature of Organization Studies

The concept, organization, is often defined as an entity where people come together to produce a common 'good'. Criticism of such an understanding and application of organization has been far reaching. Weick (1969) and others since him (cf., Antoft, Lundback and Weber, 2003; Brewis and Linstead, 2000) have drawn attention to the processes of organizing, rather than organization as a formal, objective, stable entity. Chia (1996) and Watson and Harris (1999) contend organizing is a processual experience, underpinned by movement. Like identity, organization is a process of becoming. The working world is an emergent process that happens and changes over time.

Parker (2002) problematizes the notion of 'organization' and 'organizing' in regards to its use in organization studies. He suggests that there are alternative ways of thinking about organizing and organizations, yet the credibility of such variations are explicitly and implicitly challenged under

the umbrella of that which is deemed management studies, or at least managerialist notions of management studies (Parker, 2002).

The noun 'organization' is usually taken to refer to not all outcomes of organizing, which it could, but instead to some very specifically constituted formal organizations. But even this more limited group contains institutions that differ very considerably in their structural and cultural characteristics... There has not been, until fairly recently, an assumption that only one organizing principle is appropriate for all these different contexts (Parker, 2002:184).

For Parker, the dominant discourse of organizing seems to be underpinned by three forms of management, that is, person, practice and discipline, as a technology of control, which in turn re-creates a hegemonic model of organization. Firstly, the *occupational group*, management, has become ubiquitous, a 'natural' sign of power and status in any organization. Secondly, the *practice of management*, managing, through its separation from the activities that are actually being managed, has received a privileged position in the division and coordination of labour. Thirdly, the *academic discipline* concerned with management and administration, management, linked to the other two forms of management noted above, has created and sustained the necessity of control. Through dominant notions of social progression in regards to nature, government, science and individual advocate, albeit often unrecognized, management becomes a means through which human beings can control the world in which they are a part and a mechanism through which they can control other humans. Parker (2002) does acknowledge 'business ethics', 'critical management studies' and 'the anti corporate protest' as 'voices' of resistance, however, he criticizes their lack of impact and the privileging of their own causes. He argues for a re-conceptualization and enactment of organizing and organization through

practice and theory. Reinterpretations of scale (e.g., small versus multinational organizations), structures (e.g., processes), and scope (e.g., localities) are suggested starting points for extending our understanding of organization studies.

Despite these criticisms, the *rational* discourse of organization, however, has been and still is, persuasive. Organizations are seen to be about reason, order, regulation, efficiency and control (Brewis and Linstead, 2000). Furthermore, rationality implies organizations are asexual and non-emotive where public and private boundaries are clearly visible (Hearn and Parkin, 1987). In this way, ‘real’ or ‘good’ organizations, and thus good organizational analysis, are objective, untainted by emotions and subjectivity (Brewis and Linstead, 2000; Burrell, 1984; Lowe, Mills, and Mullen, 2002). This narrow interpretation of organization dominates organizational life and limits what we see, accept and do as organizing in both academic and ‘industry’ management circles (Parker, 2002). The pervasiveness of notions of ‘good work’ are sustained in part by dualisms, that is, where there is good work there is an assumption that there must be a counterpart, ‘bad work’. My discussion of a good - bad work dualism leads me down two related paths, one that views organizational life, or good work, as desexualized and two, the space, or lack thereof, for stigmatized work, or bad work, within organizational life and studies. Integral to this is unravelling how particular notions of organization and organizing are sustained and how these notions play a role in how we make sense of who we, and others, are, in and around organizational life.

3.2. Sex Work and Organization Studies

The understanding that organizations are objective, stable entities representing order, reason, efficiency and control also implies that organizations are non-emotive and asexual (Brewis and Linstead, 2000; Hearn and Parkin, 1987; Parker, 2002). This is to say there is no place for sex, including discussion of 'it', in and around organizational life; sex and organization are mutually exclusive. Sex in organizational life and related studies are often suppressed or neglected, in some way representing 'bad' work. Emotions of any sort would affect an organization's ability to be rational and efficient, thereby demonstrating the need to maintain a divide between private life, of which emotion and sex may be a part, and public life (Hearn and Parkin, 1987). However, Burrell (1984), Burrell and Hearn (1989), Hearn and Parkin (1983; 1987) and Hearn, Sheppard, Tancred-Sheriff and Burrell (1989) argue that organizations are not asexual. Organizations construct and are constructed by sexuality, that is, organizations are areas of sexual practices (Hearn and Parkin, 1987). Furthermore, recent work on organization and emotion has also drawn attention to the subjective side of organizational life (Bolton, 2005a; Fineman, 2000). In organizations whose explicit task is defined in terms of sexuality (e.g., prostitution, exotic dancing, fashion), the dialectical relationship between organization, sexuality and emotion becomes more explicit. While it is not my intent to focus upon sex, gender and sexuality as a focal point for this exploration, I would argue that in looking at sex work as a suitable site for organization studies we have no choice but to confront the 'sex' and the emotion that is inherent, but often overlooked, in organizational life and studies. Sex work exists in such sharp contrast to

‘normal’ organizational life, and by studying sex work in organization studies, organization studies researchers are ‘forced’ to acknowledge sex and emotion, even if in an attempt to deny and resist ‘it’.

3.2.1. Defining Sex, Sexuality and Gender

The focus of this research is not upon the ‘gendered’ nature of sex work. There is plethora of research that adopts various feminist lenses to understand the nature of sex work and those working in or associated with the industry. My contribution to organization studies rests primarily with understanding identity at work and challenging how we see, understand and do organizing in organization studies. I am interested in the ‘organization’ of sex work as a site to illuminate the complexities of work-based identity, that is, the various resources available to individuals and how the individual makes sense of who she and others are, in and around organizational life. At the same time, however, given the nature of the work it would be remiss of me to overlook the ‘gendered’ nature of the type of work performed. In this section, I ground my understanding of sex, sexuality and gender in the extant literature to help make sense of the stories told by those encountered and the archival material drawn upon later in this research.

Sex, sexuality, and gender are contested concepts (Flax, 1990; Kong, 2003; Oerton and Phoenix, 2001; Rubin, 1993). Conflicts within and across various religious, political, medical, and feminist groups as to the definitions, arrangements, privileges, evaluations of sexual behavior illuminate the complexities in even attempting to conceptualize definitive

depictions of sex, sexuality and gender (Rubin, 1993:23). Casey, McLaughlin and Richardson (2004:387) contend over the last 50 years there have been enormous changes in what sexuality and associated terms mean to us, “what identities are available, what we consider to be sexual acts, what sex is post-AIDS, and in the goals and strategies of social movements concerned with sexual politics” have greatly shifted. Similarly, Weeks (2003:5) has noted conceptualizations of sex, gender and sexuality have been shifting and this is evident in our increased tolerance of difference and a re-evaluation of the relationships between ‘men’ and ‘women’. However, these researchers argue persuasive discourses that surfaced in the past still inform ideological justifications for uncontrollable male lust, the downgrading of female sexual autonomy, the treatment of sexual minorities and the acceptance (or lack thereof) of alternative realities of love and relationships (Weeks, 2004:5). These researchers argue for a social constructionist theory of sexuality so as to acknowledge the historical and social organization of sexuality and associated concepts in an attempt to unsettle truths about sex.

The distinction often made between *sex* and *gender* is that the former refers to chromosomal, anatomical, or biological differences to denote the ‘female sex’ and the ‘male sex’, while the latter refers to a set of historical, socially constructed phenomena bound by ‘rules’ or expectations that are associated with either femininity and masculinity (Clegg, 1981; Flax, 1990; Helms Mills and Mills, 1999; Mills and Murgatroyd, 1991; Rubin, 1993). While the study of gender has made enormous ‘progress’ in redressing the marginalized position of minorities, specifically ‘women’ in both private and public realms, some researchers highlight how our understandings of

gender are informed by restrictive biological categories of male - female, allowing little room for unsettling the dualisms underpinning the entire sex - gender system (Rubin, 1993). Butler (1999), Rubin (1993), Vance (1984), among others have noted the limits of feminism in destabilizing sex essentialism underpinning both sex and gender as defined above. They contend that gender, the cultural making of biological sex, sustains a heterosexual - homosexual dualism and thus the sexual hierarchy of acceptable behaviour, thoughts and being (Rubin, 1993; Vance, 1984).

Butler (1999), Rubin (1993), Simon (1996), Vance (1984) and Weeks (2003) argue for social constructionist theory of sexuality. In this way, sexuality is understood as a historical construction that brings together various biological, mental and cultural possibilities and notions including, but not restricted to, gender identity, bodily influences, reproductive capacities, need, desire, fantasies, performance, hormones, hobbies, expressions of love, violence, institutions, values, and so on that are temporal and even contradictory (Simon, 1996; Weeks, 2003). These 'elements' may or may not be linked together (Weeks, 2003). Sexualities are articulated at many points within economic, social, cultural and political structures of the material world (Dudash, 1997; Vance, 1984; Weeks, 2003). Furthermore, while sexuality is grounded in the body's structure and physiology, "the body and its actions are understood according to the prevailing codes of meaning" (Vance, 1984:8).

Rubin (1993), Vance (1984), and Butler (1999) also discuss the relationship between a social construction of sexuality and a social construction of gender. Rubin (1993) notes that in her earlier work (cf.,

Rubin, 1975:159) she used the concept sex / gender system to refer to the “arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity” through which gender and sex were both part of the same underlying processes. In this later piece, Rubin (1993) contends that gender and sex are related, however, they are not the same. Sexuality as a theory of gender does not fully account for sexuality as a social organization, given the ideological agenda that concentrates upon ‘men’ and ‘women’ surrounding feminist work on gender. In this way, gender and sexuality are overlapping; yet separate (Vance, 1984).

My intent, however, is not to dismiss the contribution of recognizing gendered processes, gendered practices or gendered organizations by adopting a social constructionist view of sexuality. In fact, I adopt a social constructionist view of gender as well to explore how dancers enact cultural notions of what it is to be a woman. For my research, I employ the terms ‘woman’ and ‘man’ to depict cultural distinctions, not biological differences. Adopting a view of gender as “patterned, socially produced, distinctions between female and male, feminine and masculine” (Acker, 1992:250) allows us to begin to see how individuals and groups are marginalized within and outside the boundaries of organizations and the accepted practices and identities that must be enacted in order to ‘fit in’. In doing this, however, I do agree with Butler (1999), Rubin (1993), among others that simply by unsettling ‘gender’ may not be enough to unravel our thinking about sexuality and challenge sex essentialism and the rigid sex hierarchy.

Similar to Frank (2002:22), I interpret sexuality as multi-faceted involving “social and personal constellations of identities (who or what people think and say they are), ideologies and fantasies (beliefs about what sex is and means; erotics), and practices and prohibitions (what people actually do with their body parts)”. Furthermore, my understanding of sexuality is one that embraces multiplicity, fluidity and contradiction, so as to allow space for the complex nature of sex, gender, sexuality as experienced by individuals through my re-presentation of their stories (Burstyn, 1987; hooks, 2000).

3.2.2. Desexualization of Organization Studies

Some 20 years ago, Burrell (1984), Burrell and Hearn (1989), Hearn and Parkin (1983; 1987), and Hearn, Sheppard, Tancred-Sheriff and Burrell (1989) drew attention to the silence of sex, sexuality and gender in organization studies and theory. They argued ‘sex’ does happen in organizations, in fact, organizations exist as worlds of sexuality, yet the literature was blind to the exploration and discussions surrounding the sexuality of organizations. Bureaucratic structures serve as a mechanism through which to eradicate and control sexuality inside and outside of work (Burrell, 1984; Hearn and Parkin, 1987, Pringle, 1988). This historical process of desexualization has meant sexuality is seen as at odds with rationality, capitalism, instrumentality, and the wage relationship (e.g., paid versus unpaid work) (Burrell, 1984; Hearn and Parkin, 1987). Sexuality is seen as an intruder in the workplace (Brewis and Linstead, 2000). Pringle (1988) notes that when sexuality is acknowledged in organizational life it is often within the boundaries of a discourse of sexual harassment. In this way,

sexuality in organizational life is viewed as a source of exploitation bound in dualisms of acceptable - unacceptable sexuality or good - bad sexuality. Organizations, however, are not asexual, organizations construct and are constructed by sexuality, that is, organizations are areas of sexual practices (Gherardi, 1995; Hearn and Parkin, 1987). Gherardi (1995:58) sees the organization as “an extra-territorial arena for the expression of sexuality which (like humour) helps to relieve the boredom, the alienation, the burn-out and the depersonalization of the bureaucratic process”. She goes further to note the success of particular types of work is dependent upon sexuality, for example people must like each other, understand each other and work well together as a group. This we can see quite vividly in service-based jobs like flight attendants where employees are expected to take on particular roles for customers (e.g., caring, attentive, friendly) (cf., Taylor and Tyler, 2000), however, it is also evident, whether perceived or ‘real’, in many of the hierarchical relationships within bureaucratic structures (e.g., boss - secretary, doctor - nurse) (Gherardi, 1995). For Gherardi (1995) sexuality is all around organizations, yet it is often marginalized. Gherardi (1995) also contends most often practices and processes of sexuality in organizational life serve to benefit the organization in attaining its objectives, although the existence or degree of exploitation is often difficult to ascertain. This, yet again, reveals the pervasiveness of organizations upon our behaviours and sense of self.

At the same time, Burrell (1984) and Hearn and Parkin (1987; 1989) argue the exclusion of sexuality from the public realm, of which formal organizations are simply one component, is relatively recent. Such insight draws upon Foucault and genealogy as a means through which we can

illuminate the temporality of particular discourses, sex and organization (Burrell, 1984; Burrell and Hearn, 1989; Foucault, 1978, 1986). Various discursive forces have been discussed to facilitate our understanding of the desexualization of organizations and organizational life. This research, however, does not take an identity focus, rather it concentrates more upon gender (and sometimes identity as it links to gender), sex, or the nature of work and organization studies. This work is useful, however, in illuminating the historical, temporal and subjective aspects of organizing in general. It is also valuable in highlighting the position of sex work in a paid work hierarchy, whether explicitly or implicitly. This is a useful starting point for positioning sex work, a form of dirty work, as an 'ideal' from which to unsettle the complexities of work-based identity and the nature of organizing.

Burrell (1984) draws upon four discursive forces or, as he refers to them, approaches, to explain the suppression of sexuality in organizations and organization analysis. Both Hollway (1989) and Rubin (1993) also draw upon discourses that they interpret as informing sexual thoughts, feelings, and activities in the West. In the paragraphs that follow I will discuss all of these approaches to illuminate the historical, political, and cultural processes that inform the desexualization of organizational life, as well as the place of sex work as both bad sexuality and bad work.

Burrell (1984) draws upon four approaches to explain the suppression of sexuality in organizations and organization analysis, namely the *civilizing process*, the *development of religious morality*, the *development of calculative rationality*, and the *development of control over time and the*

body. The eradication in public and containment in private of sexuality has meant that emotions such as love, comfort, among various others are not seen as part of the organizational world.

For some, the de-emphasis on sexuality may have sprung from a moral stance which advocated the enticement of rough peasant stock away from the 'natural crudities' of rural existence and towards a more civilized life style. Added to this, the legitimation of desexualization offered by many religious beliefs was based upon a rejection of the 'baser animal instincts' within human beings. In later periods, the development of a Puritan calculative rationality emphasized a view that sexuality was expressive of nonrational, uncontrollable emotions which must be suppressed in the interests of efficiency and good order. Finally, under capitalism, desexualization is encouraged because both time and the human body become commodified and therefore exploitable. Sexuality and labour power are not compatible. Sexual relations are wasteful (Burrell, 1984:113).

For Burrell (1984) the suppression of sexuality in organizations is about control, however, sexuality still exists within organizational life. Sexuality surfaces as resistance to organizational control (e.g., acts against formal and informal rules discouraging sexual relations at work), but it is not limited to acts of resistance. Some activity involves violence, sadism, oppression and harassment in and around the workplace (Burrell, 1984). He notes that undoubtedly acknowledging and even embracing sexuality in organizational life is complicated, however, that in itself is not enough reason to ignore it. Overall then, Burrell (1984) provides a means through which to understand how sexuality and organizational life (and studies of it) are not seen to be compatible, even if sex in some form is a blatant 'truth' of organizational life. If we extend his argument further, we can see then that organizations and organizational researchers that acknowledge and even embrace

sexuality in the workplace are likely to be viewed as irrational, emotive, tainted, less credible, thus representing bad work. Sex work then represents the antithesis of organizational life and studies (Brewis and Linstead, 2000). The sex industry illuminates the interconnectedness of sexuality and organizing to such extent it becomes impossible to ignore the relationships. It exists in such contrast to the comforts of our knowledge of organizational life that we marginalize, ignore or reject it as normal or legitimate organizing.

Two decades later, we have seen significant growth in recognition of sexuality within organization studies and theory, at least in regards to the gendering of organizational studies (Lowe, Mills and Mullen, 2002). There is of course some question as to the extent to which the gendering of organizational analysis has been embraced or perceived as legitimate by the 'mainstream' (Mavin and Bryans, 1999; Townsley, 2003; Vieira du Cunha and Pina e Cunha, 2002). Nevertheless, it is becoming more and more difficult for organizational analysts to avoid some consideration of 'gender' in their work. Despite the increased evidence of the gendering organizational analysis, Brewis and Linstead (2000) still see significant need to embrace sexuality in organizational analysis. In their extensive analysis of organizations as sites of sexuality, sex work and organizing they draw on Hollway's (1989) key discourses which inform sexual thought, feelings and activities in the West to illuminate the desexualization of organizations and the positioning of sex work and workers in the organizational world. These discourses, namely, the *male sexual drive*, the *have-hold* and the *permissive*, influence the construction and reconstruction of sexuality throughout history, and in turn inform our ways of thinking

about sex work (Brewis and Linstead, 2000). The *male sexual drive discourse* posits male sexual libido as uncontrollable. Men, and therefore not women, are driven by their particular biological make-up (Brewis and Linstead, 2000:191). Brewis and Linstead (2000) draw upon this discourse to illuminate the position of the sex worker, in this case the prostitute, as a necessary, but stigmatized role to satisfy the sexual desires of men. The *have-hold discourse* emphasizes the marital bond and patriarchal family. This juncture is seen to emerge from the late eighteenth century onwards whereby it was acceptable for men to go outside their relationships with their wives to find sexual satisfaction if these desires could not be met within the marital bond, that is, if the man's desires were in fact too risqué for their respectable partner. However, in order to protect and maintain the pretence of their families these men were expected to condemn in public those very women who they were dependent upon privately (Brewis and Linstead, 2000; Laqueur, 1990). So on the one hand these women are embraced and in fact needed to maintain order in the patriarchal family, that is, in the private realm, however, on the other hand these women were to be stigmatized in public because such tasks were seen to be morally tainted (Brewis and Linstead, 2000). Brewis and Linstead (2000) acknowledge that the double standard inherent in the have-hold discourse (i.e., sexual fidelity is far more important for women than men) has been debated by many feminists, yet Brewis and Linstead still see it as largely compelling. Furthermore, the rejection of this double standard is even less likely to be actualized within the sex industry. The moral and physical taint surrounding sex work means sex workers suffer the effects of re-presenting the dark side of the have-hold discourse, as well as complementing the male sexual drive discourse. The *permissive discourse* is seen to surface around the 1960s

whereby sexual freedom of both sexes is embraced (Hollway, 1989). Women are seen to have the same sexual wants as men and sexuality is not limited to heterosexuality or even penetrative intercourse. Brewis and Linstead (2000) are not convinced of the pervasiveness of the permissive discourse in understanding the position of sex work in society. They feel that if the permissive discourse were particularly persuasive, there would be little need for men (e.g., they note that sex work, specifically prostitution, is still primarily a market for heterosexual men) to go outside relationships with their partners to achieve sexual satisfaction. Sexual liberation (for both men and women) could be achieved within their marital relationships. In this way, the demand for sex work would become obsolete. Given the growth of the sex industry it seems highly unlikely that all sexual wants are being met within partnerships (Frank, 2002; Weitzer, 2000). In addition, given that the market for sex work services, at least in the West, is still primarily comprised of men encourages us to challenge the claim of sexual equality for men and women (Brewis and Linstead, 2000). Overall, drawing upon Hollway's (1989) work and Brewis and Linstead's (2000) interpretation of that work, we can see that the discursive forces constituting our sense of sexuality in organizational life in general and more specifically the position of the sex industry are multiple, with some discourses more persuasive than others (Thomas and Linstead, 2002). Furthermore, the temporality and cultural specificities of particular discourses in understanding sexuality, organization and sex work also play a significant role (Brewis and Linstead, 2000). More explicitly in Brewis and Linstead's (2000) work than in Burrell's (1984) we can see how they surface the place of sex work as both bad work and bad sex. Similar to Burrell (1984) and Hearn and Parkin (1987), Brewis and Linstead (2000:2) contend in order to

understand organizations we must look to understand sexuality, that is, “organizing is always and already a sexual activity”. Brewis and Linstead (2000) explicitly link organizations and sexuality and extend this analysis to understanding sex work as a site for organization studies. Brewis and Linstead (2000) do devote one chapter to discussing consumption and identity, however, understanding identity at work is not the driving force behind their research. Their work becomes particularly pertinent for my research as a starting point to link sex work and organization studies and the complexities that individual workers confront and ‘manage’ in making sense of who they, and others are, given the work they perform.

Similar to Burrell (1984) and Hollway (1989), Rubin (1993) provides an account of the historical processes over the past two centuries that she sees as constituting present dominant discourses of sexuality. She illuminates various discursive junctures, including but not limited to, the *Victorian morality discourse*, the *sex offender discourse* (of which the homosexual menace is integral) and the *child porn panic discourse*. These discourses help explain in part the restrictive notion of sexuality accepted in society and repressed notions in organizational life as we see it today. She discusses the *Victorian morality discourse* emerging in England and the United States during the late nineteenth century. Prostitution (and other forms of sex work), masturbation (especially among the young), images and literature (e.g., nude paintings), birth control information, public intimacy (e.g., dancing), among other vices were the target of various social, medical and legal enforcement. She sees the effects of these discursive practices still pervading our attitudes about sexuality, marriage, medical practice, child-rearing and sex law. Sex work then becomes both an example of bad

sexuality (e.g., outside the marital arrangements, not for procreative purposes, deviant acts, public), as well as bad work (e.g., illegitimate, even criminal occupational grouping). Rubin (1993) also discusses the emergence of the *sex offender discourse* during the 1940s - 1960s in the United States. The sex offender was a term that could apply to individuals or groups partaking in various activities - violent, illegal, moral and physically tainted (e.g., child molester, rapist, 'homosexual'). The boundaries of the sex offender discourse were unclear, including acts of sexual violence, as well as consensual, but illegal acts such as sodomy. Rubin (1993) pays particular attention to the repression of homosexuality (referring to both male and female homosexuality) during this period, however, she does note that similar patterns are likely to be evident in pornography, prostitution, and other sexualities deemed deviant at that time. The *child porn panic* is the third discourse that Rubin (1993) discusses in some detail. Rubin (1993:6) sees the appeal to 'protect children' emerging in the 1970s as one of the most persuasive discursive techniques witnessed in the twentieth century. Artists, writers, educators, care-givers, researchers, alike have experienced censorship, surveillance, harassment, embarrassment, and even criminality as an effect of the development of this discourse. Sex education, homosexuality, pornography, abortion and pre-marital sex have all been targeted as a part of this child porn panic in an attempt to eradicate and repress particular notions of sexuality. The capillary effects of these discursive junctures extend to various aspects of our lives, both private and public. They inform our attitudes about what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable sexuality, including what acts are normal (e.g., penetrative intercourse), where 'it' is to be conducted (e.g., in private) and even with whom it is appropriate (e.g., heterosexual consenting adults of legal age).

Again, here we see how sex work crosses both avenues of that which constitutes abnormal or bad sexuality and illegitimate or bad work. Rubin (1993) also makes a distinction between sex workers and other sexual minorities. She sees sex work as an occupation, while sexual deviation is a sexuality preference, however, both share some common features of social organization (Rubin, 1993:18). The underlying criminality and moral taint of sex-oriented businesses keep them marginal, underdeveloped and distorted similar to other sexual preferences deemed abnormal (Rubin, 1993).

Rubin (1993) and others drawing upon her work (cf., Brewis and Linstead, 2000; Kong, 2003) argue that sex work and sex workers are subject to criticism and stigma on a number of fronts. They argue that a rigid *sex hierarchy* underpins fixed notions of good sex, that is, that which is private, non-commercial, monogamous, marital and heterosexual. In turn, sex workers are subjects of dualist notions of sex, sexuality and gender (e.g., heterosexual / homosexual, private / public, masculinity / femininity). Sex workers and sex work symbolize bad sex as that which occurs outside marriage, public, promiscuous, and not for reproductive purposes (Frank, 2002; Rubin, 1993). Various religious (e.g. biblical pronouncements of sexual acts deemed moral), medical / psychiatric (e.g. psychosexual disorders listed in various public medical archives denoting mental and emotional inferiority) and popular culture (e.g., mass media propaganda about sexual sin, psychological inferiority, anti-communism, accusations of witchcraft) ideologies create and sustain this system of sexual stigma. As noted by Rubin (1993:14), “any sex that violates these rules is “bad”, “abnormal” or “unnatural””. Figure 3.1. depicts what Rubin (1993:13)

describes as the charmed circle versus the outer limits of the sex hierarchy. While those researchers noted above who draw upon Rubin's (1993) work do begin to make the link between the position of sex work as bad work and the problematics of identity construction, Rubin's agenda is not identity-specific. Rubin's (1993) work, however, is useful in contextualizing sex work as bad or dirty work and the historical significance of organizing.

Furthermore, Rubin (1993) contends models of the hierarchical valuation of sexuality assume a *domino theory of sexual peril*, whereby there is a need to draw a line between good - bad sex. This line stands between sexual order and chaos. There is always ongoing debate in various discourses on sex (e.g., religious, political, feminist) as to where to draw the line between good and bad sex (Rubin, 1993). Furthermore, what serves as good - bad sex in particular discourses is temporal and somewhat fluid over time (Foucault, 1978; Oerton and Phoenix., 2001; Rubin, 1993). For example, the view of unmarried couples living together, masturbation, and some forms of homosexuality (e.g., monogamous, long term) have moved and are moving in the direction of the good sex side (Richardson, 2004). Overall, however, Rubin (1993) contends this sexuality morality is in lines with ideologies of racism more so than with true ethics, it grants virtues to dominant groups and transfers vice to the underprivileged.

Rubin (1993) also sees several other dominant views about sexuality restricting the development of a radical theory of sexuality (Rubin, 1993). These views include *sexual essentialism*, *sex negativity*, the *fallacy of misplaced scale* and the *lack of a concept of benign sexual variation*.

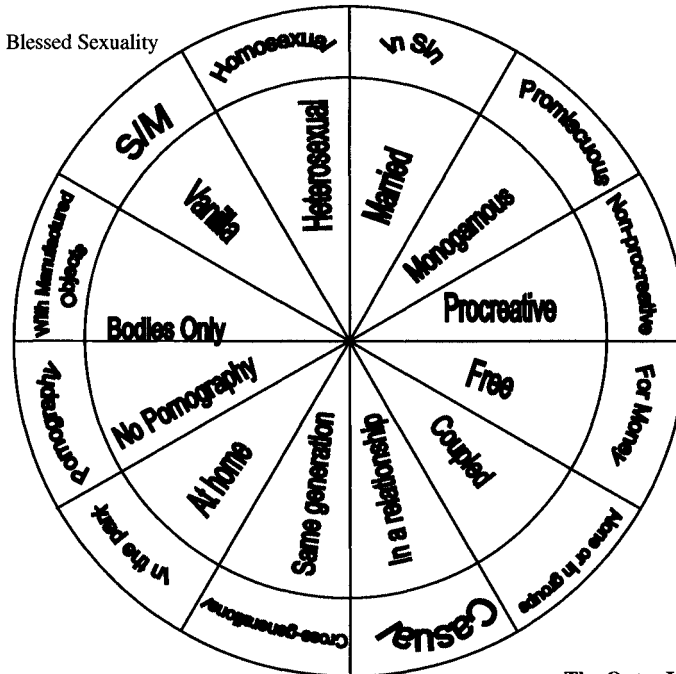
Sexual essentialism is the idea that sex exists prior to social life and it is unchanging, ahistorical and asocial (Foucault, 1978; Rubin, 1993). Medicine, psychiatry and the academic study of sexuality have created and sustained essentialism (Rubin, 1993). Once we begin to recognize that sexuality is a historical, political, social and temporal phenomenon we begin to challenge dominant discourses of sexuality that enable and constrain our sense of ourselves and our being (Foucault, 1978; Rubin, 1993). In this way, what we define and understand as sex, gender and sexuality is socially constructed, of course not without material effects. The idea that sexuality in Western societies is associated with *negativity*; dangerous, destructive, sinful, means sexuality is something to be treated with suspicion unless it falls within established safe and accepted areas (e.g. marriage, love) (Rubin, 1993). This further illuminates the stigmatized position of sex work in society and in organizational life and studies. Dangerous, destructive, sinful behaviour, connotations that sex work surface, is not what we want to represent as the ideal, in our private or public lives. The *fallacy of misplaced scale* is similar to that of sex negativity in that sexuality is an area that warrants significant attention and control (Rubin, 1993). Sex acts have been given far too much significance over time and been subject to cultural, legal and political focus and punishment. Other areas of our behaviour (e.g., our diets) have never warranted such attention, so why has our sexual behaviour been unduly targeted? Rubin (1993) goes further to argue that the *lack of concept for benign sexual variation* generates fixed notions of sexuality; there is an ideal sexuality in all discourses of sexuality, albeit often different ideals (e.g., religion – procreative marriage, psychology – mature heterosexuality) (Frank, 2002). Variation is embraced in most other areas

of our lives yet why is there the need to create and sustain a single notion of acceptable sexuality and the best way to achieve that standard?

The Charmed Circle:

Good, Normal, Natural, Blessed Sexuality

Heterosexual
Married
Monogamous
Procreative
Non-commercial
In pairs
In a relationship
Same generation
In private
No pornography
Bodies only
Vanilla



The Outer Limits:

Bad, Abnormal, Unnatural, Damned Sexuality

Homosexual
Unmarried
Promiscuous
Non-procreative
Commercial
Alone or in groups
Cross-generational
In public
Pornography
With manufactured objects
Sadoomasochistic

Figure 3.1 The Charmed Circle

Rubin, G. (1993). 'Thinking sex:Notes for a radical theory of the politics of sexuality', in Abelove, H., M. Barale, and D. Halperin (Ed.) *The lesbian and gay studies reader*. New York:Routledge:13.

Overall, Rubin's (1993) work complements the work of Burrell (1984) and Hollway (1989) in offering an understanding of the various historical, political and cultural processes that construct sex work as both bad work and bad sex. In re-presenting sex work, a form of dirty work, as a relevant site for organization studies' research, Brewis and Linstead (2002:308) contend "it is, nevertheless, organized; it is, somehow, managed". At the

same time, however, they also acknowledge that sex work holds a critical position between sex and organization, as both bad or dirty work (e.g., sexual, emotive, tainted) and bad sex (e.g., commercial, public) (Brewis and Linstead, 2000). Moreover, this work does illuminate the historical and subjective aspect of sex work and work in general, however, how this might play a role in the identity work of individuals is either overlooked or only partially explored. My research builds upon the extant literature discussed to draw attention to how the historical and subjective significance of the type of work performed might serve as a resource of identity construction for the individual. It also allows us to problematize ‘truths’ regarding legitimate organizations, and in turn, legitimate organization studies’ research.

3.2.3. Sex Work as a Form of Dirty Work

Ideals of any form serve as a standard by which we can evaluate its worth in some way. If indeed we can say, under the pretext of modernity, that the ideal organization is one that is rational, objective, asexual, non-emotive, and efficient, then these organizations are viewed in positive terms, and thereby seen as good in some way (Hearn and Parkin, 1987). Part of positioning or privileging a particular notion as ideal entails having an ‘other’ from which to compare the ideal (Brewis and Linstead, 2000). So, if an organization is in some way less than the ideal, this organization is viewed as less good than those organizations that do espouse the attributes of good organizing. In effect, organizations that do not appear to portray the characteristics of the ideal come to represent that which is inferior or even that which is not good, but bad. Bad work then reflects the attributes not represented by good work, namely, sexuality, subjectivity, emotive, and by

association, irrationality and inefficiency. Bad work re-presents undesirable characteristics of organizational life and is tainted in some way. Furthermore, good is often associated with a notion of moral virtue, purity and even cleanliness (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999). This in turn implies that bad work is in some way immoral, illegal, contaminated, polluted and even *dirty* (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999).

As discussed in Chapter One, Hughes (1958) used the term dirty work to refer to occupations or tasks that are likely to be viewed as undesirable or degrading. These tasks have been created by society to serve some perceived need or through structural conditions in maintaining order and control, whether that is to provide services for the families of the deceased (e.g., mortician), clean the streets of litter (e.g., garbage collectors), sustain the marital bond or patriarchal family by fulfilling men's unsatisfied sexual desires (e.g., prostitutes), or support the 'ill' (e.g., psychiatrists) (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999). However, society in turn marginalizes these tasks so that these occupations are stigmatized in some way (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999). Individuals performing these tasks are also stigmatized and seen to personify the attributes of the dirty work, so that they become dirty workers (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999). Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) provide a review of dirty work and categorize dirty work according to the different types of taint as noted by Hughes (1958:122), namely physical, social or moral. They draw our attention to the lacuna of research on these jobs and the individuals who work in these jobs in organization studies. They note that these jobs exist and the stigma attached to these jobs and the persons working in them are 'real' (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999). Ashforth and Kreiner's (1999) classification of dirty work occupations, as depicted in

Table 3.1., highlights the broad scope of activities that are stigmatized in some way, as well as the extent of dirtiness that these occupation re-present based upon occupational prestige. The numbers indicated next to the occupation refer to the occupational prestige score and range from nine to eighty-two.

<u>Primary Taint</u>	<u>Occupational Prestige</u>	
	<u>Relatively Low</u>	<u>Relatively High</u>
Physical		
- Garbage, death, effluent, etc.	• Butcher (32)	• Funeral director (52)
- Noxious conditions	• Miner (26)	• Dentist (70)
Social		
- Regular contact with stigmatized others	• Prison guard (guard) (22)	• Social worker (52)
- Servile relationship	• Shoe shiner (bootblack) (9)	• NA ^b
Moral		
- Sinful or dubious work	• Exotic dancer (NA)	• Casino manager (NA)
- Deceptive, intrusive, confrontational etc.	• Bill collector (26)	• Police Interrogator (police) (48)
a. Cell entries are illustrative – not exhaustive. Occupational prestige scores are derived from the National Opinion Research Center (NORC, 1989). Scores range from a low of 9 (bootblack) to a high of 82 (physician). The occupational names shown in parentheses are the actual names used by NORC.		
b. A servile relationship is likely to severely reduce the status element of prestige.		

Table 3.1. Classifying Dirty Work Occupations^a

Ashforth, B and Kreiner, G. (1999). "How can you do it?": Dirty work and the challenge of constructing a positive identity', Academy of Management Review 24 (3):416.

In Chapter Two Ashforth and Kreiner's (1999) research on dirty workers and social identity was discussed to illustrate the efforts through which dirty workers challenge, negotiate and manage their spoiled identities. They propose that dirty workers draw upon the group, that is, other stigmatized workers within their occupational grouping, as a resource in making sense of their work-based identities. Various techniques, including reframing, refocusing and recalibrating, are employed to justify the work or infuse positive value upon the work performed. In turn, this allows dirty workers to develop more positive work-based identities and minimize the stigma associated with their sense of self. As noted in Chapter Two, however,

Ashforth and Kreiner's (1999) work does not focus upon the individual or agency involved in identity construction, something my research brings more clearly to the surface. Furthermore, Thompson and Harred's (1992) work on exotic dancers also illustrates how individual dancers engage in various techniques to manage the stigmatized position of the work they perform and their sense of self because of their occupation. These techniques might be considered a form of agency, however, Thompson and Harred (1992) do not explore it or discuss it as such. Moreover, Thompson and Harred (1992) do not problematize the position of sex work as 'dirty' or discuss it as a specific resource for the individual in making sense of her work-based identity. Wicks (2002) in his research upon the image of miners at a Nova Scotia colliery and Bolton (2005b) in her research on gynaecology nurses also draw attention to the historical significance of how occupational groupings are categorized and viewed by various constituents as dirty work. Studying dirty work occupations, and those individuals who perform the work, surface the various resources that an individual might draw upon in constructing her work-based identities, however, the research discussed does not really explicitly discuss it as resources of identity construction for the individual. Furthermore, most of this research looks at one or two aspects involved in identity construction, without attempting to reconcile the various resources available to the individual and her agency. The extant literature, does, however, highlight the subjectivity, that is, the emotive, sexual, and socially constructed nature of how we understand organizational life and our position within it. Moreover, the temporality inherent in organizational life becomes apparent in studying dirty work, as what 'we' come to understand as dirty shifts over time as a mutually constitutive process between various macro, meso and micro intersections.

My research moves us toward a more complete picture, although not necessarily a complete picture, of understanding how identity happens for the individual and the intersection and interactions among various resources and individual agency. This is something the extant literature to date has not attempted to fully capture.

3.2.4. The Sameness and Difference of Sex Work and Other Forms of Work

Brewis and Linstead (2002) argue that sex work, specifically prostitution, has many similarities with other service industries in that it is highly fragmented, hierarchical and stratified and exploring sex work from a 'management' lens would prove fruitful and insightful. While they note the difficulties of researching the sex industry (e.g., access, degree of fragmentation, controversy around commercial sex), they conclude similar methodological challenges also arise in studying other sites (e.g., small and medium-sized businesses). Furthermore, like other stigmatized occupations or jobs requiring emotional labour, understanding identity construction makes studying sex work particularly relevant to management studies. Ronai and Ellis (1989:272) explore the interactional strategies of table dancers and demonstrate that the strategies employed by dancers "mirror 'respectable' negotiation in mainstream culture". They also compare it to other service occupations in which emotion management are essential, highlighting that in table dancing there are high emotional consequences. Ronai and Ellis (1989), however, do not focus upon identity in their exploration. Wood (2000) describes the power relationships involved in stripping as multi-directional and she compares it to the power in sales relationships. "The customer can influence the salesperson's work

environment and financial success, while the salesperson can influence the customer's access to the product" (Wood, 2000:27). She does not, however, dismiss the 'masculine power' inherent in this type of occupation. Wood (2000:11) does not really clearly describe what exactly she interprets as masculine power, however, she does state that masculine power is "power that differentiates men from women, ordinarily being attributed to men, and when acknowledged in women, it is downplayed, de-emphasized, or construed as unfeminine". She emphasizes the enactment by men and women together through interactions that reinforce cultural notions of masculinity and femininity (e.g., men as financial providers, women as pretty dolls). Wood (2000) concentrates upon power relations and while issues of identity emerge through her exploration work-based identity does not drive her research. West and Austrin (2002) also argue that there are parallels between sex work, specifically prostitution, and mainstream work. Sex work, like mainstream work, is constituted through the ongoing negotiation and interactions of diverse actors. These actors and actions are linked through wide networks that must be understood in order to gain insight into the "discursive production of identities" (West and Austrin, 2002:482). West and Austrin (2002) concentrate more upon meso and macro resources of identity construction and linking sex work with other forms of work. Funari (1997), a sex worker, sees all work as sex work. Funari (1997) illuminates the lack of creativity or customization required in the performance of her peep shows. She performs the same activities for all clients over and over, without any real variation in movement, expression or emotion. She compares the standardization of work processes to that evident in many other jobs, including that of McDonald's, as well to her activities of daily living. She rejects the notion that sex work exists to allow us to define

ourselves and our culture as normal, that is, normal relative to sex work. Rather she sees the peep show as mirroring culture. Funari's (1997) work illuminates the objective aspects of sex work, however, she does not explore work-based identity. In a similar vein, Brewis and Linstead (2000) also express concern over the spurious claims that sex work is different than other types of work, in that it represents the abnormal.

When looking at sex work, we constantly see, not a foreign object, not something alien and Other, but ourselves – refracted and sometimes distorted, to be sure – but another side of ourselves, not opposed, but connected. The further we explore the complexities of sex work, the clearer the few significant differences from normal organizing emerge, but the similarities and the inseparability of sex work from other forms of works, and other manifestations of sexuality, are unavoidable (Brewis and Linstead, 2000:290).

In looking at the similarities Brewis and Linstead (2000) also acknowledge the differences of sex work and other forms of work. They draw attention to the differences across the sex industry and even within particular localities. Weitzer (2000) also notes that the term 'sex work' is often used to over generalize without acknowledging differences between and within categories of sex work. For example, within exotic dancing there are a variety of contexts in which workers may be expected to work (e.g., no contact / contact, topless only / fully nude, self-employed or not) (Chapkis, 2000; Dragu and Harrison, 1988; Weitzer, 2000). Even organizations that offer seemingly similar services will still likely have different organizational cultures and individuals will experience these environments uniquely. I am cautious in making an argument for the similarities between sex work and other forms of work as it runs the risk of normalizing sex work (Weitzer, 2000); this is not my intent. In looking to both the

similarities and differences of sex work (Burrell, 1988) and other forms of work, that is 'normal' or 'good' work, I hope to unsettle dominant notions enveloping management research and practice. My objective is not to 'prove' that sex work is a legitimate site for study, rather it is to unsettle our notions of what we see, accept and enact as 'normal' in our understanding of organizing, organization and sites of study in management studies.

3.3. Building Theory in Studying Identity at Work

This chapter set out to contextualize the nature of organization studies as narrow in scope and limited in exploring the subjective, objective, historical, yet temporal aspects of organizational life. This chapter has argued that in constructing an ideal of organizational life, underpinned by objectivity, reason, non-emotion, and asexuality, these characteristics have come to serve as the virtues of good work, the same virtues inherent in modernity (Brewis and Linstead, 2000; Burrell, 1984). Notions of what is deemed good work are sustained by dualisms, so where there is good work there must also be something that represents bad work. Bad work therefore comes to represent work that is sexual, emotive, tainted, subjective, or irrational, where public and private selves overlap (Brewis and Linstead, 2000). Constructing and sustaining such notions of good - bad work restricts what we embrace as legitimate, normal organizational life in both practice and academia (Brewis and Linstead, 2000). These constructions also transfer to the individuals working in and associated with particular types of work, so that we also see individuals as more or less worthy given their occupations. Like Brewis and Linstead (2000), Hearn and Parkin (1987) and Parker (2002) in this chapter I argue for research that challenges the

dominant discourses of organizing so as to broaden what we see, feel and enact as organization studies and research. Dirty work is posited as a unique opportunity to confront the intersections between identity and stigma, as well as to challenge our truths about legitimate organizing and extend our understanding of alternative forms of organizational life. Furthermore, sex work, as a form of dirty work, offers a unique opportunity to embrace the subjectivity (e.g., emotion) inherent in organizational life and studies, while at the same time acknowledge the historical and objective nature of organizing (Brewis and Linstead, 2000; Hearn and Parkin, 1987). To date, the research that has linked sex work and organization studies has focused more upon macro considerations in how particular types of work are positioned in a paid work hierarchy and how organizational life as an objective entity is mostly an unchallenged 'truth'. This work is invaluable in drawing attention to macro resources of identity construction available to the individual, although the focus of this research is not usually identity-specific. Furthermore, the sex work literature has been more concerned with a 'gender' lens concentrating upon the objectification of 'woman', whereby identity and work become secondary to understanding the process of becoming in general.

Fusing the extant literature on emotion work, identity regulation as a form of organizational control, social identity, dirty work with the literature discussed in this chapter offers an opportunity to conceptualize and empirically explore the multiple resources available to the individual in her identity work, as well as how agency is integral to understanding how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity. To capture the agency and individual experience, that of researcher and 'researched',

that is integral to understanding work-based identity a social constructivist approach was adopted for this research. In the next chapter I describe how my methodological approach aligns with the theoretical lens developed in Chapters Two and Three.

3.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter explored how sex work, a form of dirty work, becomes an 'ideal' from which to surface the intersections and interactions between the various macro, meso and micro resources of identity construction. To date, much of the organization studies' literature that links sex work and organization studies does not specifically take an identity lens and therefore leaves many unanswered questions about how the nature of work and identity intersect. The research in this area that does look at identity usually places identity secondary to issues of gender and the nature of organizational life. Moreover, researchers within the sex work literature and mainstream organization studies literature that have begun to explore some of these aspects generally concentrate upon one or two aspects without really illuminating how these resources interact and intersect and how the individual draws upon these resources in making sense of her work-based identity. This chapter has posited sex work as a site for organization studies to surface the historical, subjective and objective aspects of organizing, the intersections between stigma, identity and work, as well as the sameness and difference of sex work and other forms of work. Together with Chapter Two, this chapter has grounded the theoretical lens to be employed in understanding how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity.

Chapter Four

Methodology

4. Introduction

This chapter provides an account of the ontological, epistemological and methodological underpinnings that guided this thesis. In this chapter I describe in detail how my understanding of the subjective individual led me to social constructivism as a suitable paradigm for exploring *how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity construction*. I also describe how this paradigm informed my theoretical, methodological and methods choices employed in this research. In describing the methodology and methods employed, I also present a ‘framework’ of analysis employed to build trustworthiness in my exploration of how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity construction. Moreover, I reflect upon the ethical considerations that emerged in exploring the lives of participants and the framework of analysis used to assess the quality of the research conducted.

4.1. The Subjective Individual and Social Constructivism

In this section I detail how my understanding of the subjective individual led me to a particular understanding of social constructivism that guided my ontological, epistemological and theoretical groundings in this research. My research question was guided as much by my own lived experiences as by what I perceived to be a theoretical lacuna in work-based identity in organization studies. My emphasis upon the lived experiences of the

individual as a way of understanding phenomenon underpinned the research process that unfolded in undertaking this research. For me, *experience* could best be captured through a subjectivist epistemology with ontological groundings in process and movement. To clarify this, three related terms need to be discussed, subjectivism, subjectivity and the subjective individual. It is also important to note that in no way do I claim to be a purist in how I understand and use the concepts, theories, and methodologies employed in this research. As noted by Crotty (1998:215), “we need not be so purist...picking and choosing...is legitimate enough”. Similarly, Foucault (1980:53) commented that he embraces the idea that the use of another’s researcher’s work should be as a particular reading, rather than ‘the’ reading, with “the only valid tribute to thought...is precisely to use it, to deform it, to make it groan and protest”. What I have done in this research is draw upon the theoretical and methodological work of others to construct a place where I was comfortable exploring my research question.

In my intellectual journey with this thesis, *subjectivism* referred to epistemology or how we come to accept and communicate what we understand as knowledge. My use of the term rejects that there are universal truths. Knowledge has to be personally experienced (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). The individual co-constructs and re-constructs meanings among various social institutions. Social institutions refer to shared social meanings, regulatory systems, governmental agencies, professions and public opinions that precede the individual and influence individual thought and action, yet at the same time they have been constructed and are continually adjusted by individuals over time (Crotty, 1998; Oliver, 1991; Wicks, 2002). Subjectivism as I used it captures both the ideological, as

well as material and historical considerations of the construction of meanings. Furthermore, the continual adjustment and retrospective sense making involved in constructing knowledge illuminates the temporality of knowledge re-construction. As noted by James (1909/ 1996:263, in Tsoukas and Chia, 2002:567), “what really exists is not things but things in the making”. The temporality involved in meaning making reflects my ontological assumptions regarding process and movement of ‘reality’ (Chia, 1996). Crotty (1998) adopts a more extreme epistemological stance of subjectivism. Crotty (1998) aligns subjectivism with structuralist, post-structuralist and postmodernist forms of thought. The subject imposes meaning upon the object and no interplay between subject and object occurs. My interpretation of subjectivism, however, does recognize the interplay between subject and object. At the same time, my emphasis is upon how the individual manages this interplay.

Subjectivity and the subjective individual are closely linked to this conceptualization of subjectivism. *Subjectivity* for this research, referred to the entire lived experiences of an individual and the physical, political, cultural and historical contexts of those experiences (Ellis and Flaherty, 1992). As noted by Ellis and Flaherty (1992:4), “subjectivity is situated such that the voices in our heads and the feelings in our bodies are linked to political, cultural and historical contexts”. Identity informs and is informed by subjectivity in that who we, and others, think we are in particular contexts is coupled to our broader lived experiences. The *subjective individual* is the view that the individual’s experiences are integral to constructing meaning. Meanings are co-constructed and re-constructed by the individual and social institutions with which she interacts. Viewing the

subject in this way captures both the distinctiveness or individuality enacted through the individual's engagement, 'resistance', acceptance and struggles with her thoughts, emotions and actions, as well as the historical significance of lived experiences that arise from cultural, social, political and economic conditions (Ellis and Flaherty, 1992).

I adopted a social constructivism paradigm to capture the subjectivism I felt was inherent in understanding how individuals make sense of their work-based identity construction. Although I drew heavily upon Crotty's (1998) work in setting up my understanding of social constructivism I differed from Crotty in how he positions social constructionism / constructivism as an epistemology, somewhere between objectivism and subjectivism. Rather than view social constructivism as an epistemological stance, like Lincoln and Guba (2000) I viewed it as a research paradigm underpinned by particular ontological, epistemological, theoretical and methodological assumptions. Social constructivism is understood to be a perspective that views individuals as continually constructing and negotiating meanings, models and concepts to make sense of experiences (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Schwandt, 2000). Those around us and specific historical, cultural, social and political contexts inform these constructions. As described by Burrell and Morgan (1979) and Denzin and Lincoln (2000), social constructivism adopts a relativist ontology through which local and specific, multiple, constructed realities emerge. At the same time, by acknowledging the specific historical, cultural and political contexts through which these realities are constructed I adopted a position that also takes into account the material effects produced by these specificities (e.g., stigma). Who we are is not just ideological, there are also material conditions which envelope our

sense of selves (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). In particular, my exploration into sex work / dirty work makes me sensitive to the experiences or outcomes (whatever form they might take) of such work for the participants involved in this study (e.g., job insecurity, withdrawal, violence). Social constructivism is seen to envelope relativism through multiple, negotiated meanings (Lincoln and Guba, 2000), realism through consideration of material effects (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000) and movement through ongoing processes of human thoughts, action and interaction (Chia, 1996).

Drawing upon Crotty's (1998) work, social constructivism differs slightly from social constructionism. According to Crotty (1998) constructivism focuses exclusively upon the meaning making of the individual. It embraces the distinctiveness of the individual and generally is not concerned with an emancipatory or critical agenda. Social constructionism, on the other hand, focuses upon the collective generation of meaning, rather than the distinctiveness of the individual's meaning making. It is usually more concerned with an emancipatory agenda and emphasizes the hold that culture has upon us in constructing meaning. I was particularly interested in the individual's meaning making; however, I also felt that the embedded nature of social, cultural, political institutions contributed to the individual's processes of meaning making. For me it was a matter of emphasis and 'social constructivism' captured my acknowledgement of the social, historical and cultural significance (and interaction) of meaning making, as well as my focus upon the individual's processes of sense making. For this research, a social constructivism perspective was not seen to deny the

possibility of emancipation; however, emancipation was not a focal point of exploration (Crotty, 1998; Schwandt, 2000).

A social constructivism perspective also allowed me to embrace my own subjectivity and view myself as a subjective individual in this process (Thomas and Davies, 2005; Thomas and Linstead, 2002). Through my conversations and engagement with participants I co-constructed and re-presented their identity at work stories as partial, retrospective accounts of their experiences, intertwined with my own lived experiences (e.g., gender, culture, age, education) (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002; Watson, 1998). As noted by Watson (1997:139 / 140),

Whether reading or writing, each of us bring to a story our own experiences of life and self in organizational settings...all that I can really do - like any other social investigator - is to listen to what my 'subjects' have to say and attempt to make a 'reading' of their words in the light of my own theoretical predispositions and concerns.

For example, my comfort (and at times discomfort) with the fluid and contradictory nature of my own work-based identity construction explains how I interpreted the stories of participants in the way I did. Their struggles and the multiple, contradictory nature of their identity work were particularly salient to me because of my own lived experiences. At the same time, the multiple methods employed in the research does, however, increase the trustworthiness of the discussions offered in the thesis and address criticisms of relativism. The accounts re-presented are undoubtedly temporal and are not intended to be viewed as static, stable and all-inclusive accounts of identity at work. I was not concerned with locating the 'truth' about identity at work. I was interested in exploring how the self was talked

about (Watson, 1998). My concern was to understand a set of truths that were co-constructed by those I interacted with and me (Watson, 1998). In this way, my epistemology was subjective whereby I considered myself a part of the process in constructing, identifying and understanding that which is understood to be knowledge.

This view of social constructivism also influenced my theoretical approach to this topic. In fusing emotion work and identity, dirty work and identity, and identity regulation as a form of organizational control, and social identity I created space for understanding how the subjective individual makes sense of their identity at work given various historical, social, cultural, and organizational resources that interact and intersect in these processes. For example, the conceptualization of identity employed in this research, that is, identity as processual, multiple, contradictory and coupled to our broader lived experiences, is aligned with the relativism, realism and fluidity described above in social constructivism. Moreover, my understanding of emotion as a lived, interactional experience within biological, cultural and social spheres accounts for the interplay between agency and structure similar to the underpinnings of social constructivism. In understanding agency as the struggles in which an individual engages, consciously or otherwise, in choosing to live a particular way (Brewis, 2004), I draw out the subjective individual in emotion work. Furthermore, in exploring exotic dancers experiences through a dirty work lens and linking it to identity regulation as a form of organization control, I also illuminated the historical and institutional forces that play a role in the co-construction of identity at work for the participants with which I interacted. Overall, the subjective individual was given space to emerge while also considering the

interplay with various social, historical and cultural resources in meaning making.

4.2. Methodological Choices

In order to explore how meanings were co-constructed by participants and me and make sense of these processes, a qualitative approach was adopted (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). A qualitative approach permitted thick, rich descriptions, embraced the contextual elements or localities of the research and offered space for my own subjectivity (Alvesson, 2002; Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). In this regard, it allowed me to explore the diverse voices of dancers and managers, as well as my own observations and experiences, that is, as a student, researcher, and 'woman' (Kleinman and Copp, 1993; Warren and Hackney, 2000). A qualitative methodology also encouraged me to adopt a flexible research approach, that is, the development of my research question was an exploratory, iterative process; my interviews were semi-structured to allow for unexpected discussions to surface; a snowballing 'sampling' technique was employed; and diversity of voices, my own and 'participants', were uncovered in the interpretation of my material gathered. This flexibility also manifested itself in my decision to use various research methods to obtain richer descriptions (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). This approach facilitated my ability to ask individuals generally about their work-related experiences to surface processes of identity at work naturally, rather than imposing identity-specific questions upon them (Coupland, 2001).

4.2.1. Ethnography

Ethnography has been described and employed in various disciplines as a philosophical paradigm, theoretical orientation and methodological approach (Tedlock, 2000). My intent is not to debate the conceptualization of ethnography. Similar to Tedlock (2000) and Schwartzman (1993), I understand ethnography to be an approach through which one can examine cultural phenomena from the inside out. Meaning is best understood through close and prolonged interaction in everyday life of a culture. I adopted the principles of an ethnographic approach without total immersion into the cultural sites (e.g., exotic dancing industry, *FYEO*) as demanded by ethnography. The three principles of ethnography I adopted included an access to the mundane, an iterative process of discovery and an embracing of tensions between respondents' and researcher voices (Schwartzman, 1993).

Identifying the mundane could only be achieved through some level of comfort with the contexts. I ruled out total immersion as a means through which to do this for several reasons. As I saw it the options of working in the industry ranged from support (e.g., bartending, servicing), to dancing, to administration or management. Working full-time elsewhere did not allow me the necessary flexibility to commit the time, responsibility and emotional energy of additional employment. Furthermore, dancing as I saw it was not a real option for me with *FYEO*. I was not certain I was willing to explore my own emotionality and physicality in the ways that I felt a job like this would require of me. In addition, the strict physical requirements of dancers also meant being employed as a dancer at *FYEO* was not highly

probable even if I did consider this a viable option for me. Working in administration, management or support would certainly have given me an insider's view; however, I am not sure it would really have exposed me to the struggles of self that dancers' engage without dancing myself. In the end, I selected ways (e.g., participant – observation, semi-structured interviews) through which I was exposed to the organizational settings and its actors on numerous occasions to experience the mundane, even if only in a limited way.

Coupled with accessing the mundane, an ethnographic approach meant the research question, design and analysis did not have to be formulaic in nature, nor did it have to be systematically developed and implemented (Schwartzman, 1993). Questions and answers were discovered as the study unfolded and this aligned well with my exploratory agenda. Ethnographic study also allowed me to embrace the tensions involved in re-presenting participants' stories while taking into account my own lived experiences (Schwartzman, 1993). As argued by Schwartzman (1993:67), the intent in ethnography is not to resolve these tensions but to “creatively exploit them”. During this process, I often engaged in my own processes of reflection to unsettle some of my fears and biases about sex work and sex workers (e.g., what would people think, what if my colleagues or students saw me, how would it affect my perceptions of men). Later in this chapter I discuss how I used reflexivity as a lens through which to write myself in the research process, as well as a framework of analysis to determine the trustworthiness of the stories re-presented in understanding work-based identity.

Overall, I did not employ ethnography in its pure form, where the researcher becomes a full insider (Hayano, 1979). I did, however, find ways through which to explore the mundane, discover the research as I went along and write myself into the process and text as advocated by an ethnographic approach; thus connecting the personal to the cultural (Ellis, 1991; Ellis and Bochner, 2000; Kleinman and Copp, 1993).

4.2.2. Case Study

The case study was determined to be the best means through which to gain access to the mundane experiences of dancers through slices of social life (Stake, 2000). In exploring how the subjective individual makes sense of her processes of work-based identity, my focus was upon the individual's experiences and not the organization, *FYEO*. At the same time, however, given the diversity in the industry (e.g., fully nude vs. topless only, non contact vs. contact) a focus upon dancers working at *FYEO* locales offered me a deeper understanding of their experiences while also allowing me the opportunity to explore how the organization might have intervened in this process. Although there were differences even across *FYEO* locales (e.g., customer demand, fully nude vs. topless only), there were similarities in house rules, management objectives and ownership that allowed me to develop a level of comfort with organizational life as demanded by ethnography. The case study allowed me to focus upon localities so that multiple realities more easily emerged in the process and facilitated repeated exposure to the same settings and individuals (Stake, 2000).

4.2.2.1. Accessing the Site

Schwartzman (1993) contends the process of gaining access and first experiences with the research settings can be a rich source of data. The researcher is likely to experience surprises, differences and misunderstandings that will affect the research design. At this stage of the process, however, the researcher may not recognize or consider these experiences. To capture these experiences, Schwartzman recommends the researcher take detailed field notes that can be drawn upon later. Following this advice, I recorded the details of how I selected *FYEO* and gained access to the clubs and the individuals working there. I also recorded the description of the physical surroundings on my initial visits and compared this to descriptions that I later observed. Later these notes offered me insight into how and why I managed these encounters the way I did and how in turn it affected the research design.

I had no contacts in the sex industry and I was living in a city and country that was relatively unfamiliar to me. I had little awareness of the number of establishments, location or structure of exotic dancing in surrounding areas. I was, however, aware that there were considerable differences between types of sex work and even within the same category of sex work. I also had some concerns about the potential risks of collecting data at night (e.g., due to the hours of operations of most clubs) on my own in unfamiliar settings. I conducted a search on-line and in the telephone directory to identify possible establishments in Newcastle and surrounding areas. Several establishments had dancers performing only certain nights of the week (and some less frequently) and operated as a general bar / club on operating days.

I assumed that the opportunity to make contact with the dancers in these types of settings might prove difficult for two reasons. Firstly, given dancing only occurred on certain occasions it would limit the potential number of evenings I could even attempt to make contact with dancers. Secondly, the establishments operated primarily as a bar and the dancing was a source of infrequent entertainment. In turn, the dancers were less likely to hang around after they had finished their show. I also assumed, perhaps inaccurately, if the establishment only provided exotic dancing infrequently the individuals were only working part-time and therefore less likely to identify with the work they performed or with the organization. In turn, I decided to concentrate upon establishments that operated primarily in exotic dancing. Coupled with this, I was also sensitive to selecting a site that would allow me access to a number of potential participants that presently were working under similar arrangements. Focusing upon a particular organization or a chain allowed me access to the individual dancers, as well as the organization, thus a more ethnographic experience. I then did a location check of the establishments during the daytime to determine any potential safety concerns in traveling to the sites. I contacted *FYEO* Newcastle club by telephone inquiring about visiting the clubs for research purposes. The manager on duty, **Terry**, was very responsive and encouraged me to visit the club.

My decision to focus primarily upon dancers and managers working at *FYEO* was based upon the fact that it was a chain with various locations across the United Kingdom. It also promoted itself as a ‘gentlemen’s’ club and I found this intriguing. With several clubs operating under the same name and ownership I assumed there would be similarities in the working

conditions, as well as some level of formalization of procedures. These characteristics of the organization offered an outlet to explore mundane activities (Chapter Five provides a detailed account of the activities and management of *FYEO*). The decision was also influenced by one of my first contacts with the club. My contact with manager **Terry** was very positive and encouraging. The constant willingness **Terry** displayed in allowing me to visit the club, introduce me to the dancers, interview him, and place me on the guest list influenced my decision to use *FYEO* as a continued site. The relationship established with **Terry**, coupled with some discouraging incidents experienced with other managers at *FYEO*, often influenced when I would even go to collect data. Although I did go to collect data when other managers were working, I tried as much as possible to go on the evenings when **Terry** was working. For example, on one occasion when I thought **Terry** was working, I called in to confirm I was coming in and was told by another manager that **Terry** was not working. On that occasion I decided not to go in and collect data because I was not as comfortable going to the club when this particular manager was working.

The relationships developed with particular contacts undoubtedly influenced what I observed, enacted and interpreted during the research process. The rapport developed with some participants also enabled me in certain incidents to have re-occurring conversations with them and thus richer accounts.

Moreover, in writing myself into the research process, one area of reflection involved the deliberate consideration of how to present myself to participants, as well as to other observers or actors (e.g., customers). In

gaining access and during the process of contact with many participants, I was cognizant of my tendency to emphasize my role as the student researcher. This was the identity assumed in my letter to participants, however, I downplayed the fact that I was also a full-time faculty member at a local university. In reflecting upon why I continuously did this, I recalled many times in the past I had been more successful in gaining cooperation with potential participants under the guise of a student, rather than as a consultant or as the employee of an organization conducting interviews. For whatever reason I think I equated the identity of a student as someone perceived as less threatening to participants, thereby making it easier to secure participation. However, whenever participants inquired about my reasons for conducting research in Newcastle, I freely gave up the information and it, at least on the surface, appeared to make little difference to their body language and willingness to participate.

4.3. Qualitative Research Methods

In order to develop an awareness of the mundane activities in organizational life, I felt it was necessary to see and experience the setting in different ways. I employed various methods to overcome the limitations of capturing only slices of organizational life. Triangulation is considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meanings, verify interpretations and offer a more indepth depiction of the phenomenon under study (Stake, 2000). Richardson (2000) moves away from the term 'triangulation' to 'crystallization' to capture the infinite variety of shapes, sizes and multi-dimensionalities of perceptions, rather than the finite three sides of a triangle that triangulation imposes upon a research approach. As a result, I

used semi-structured interviews, participant - observation, diary notes and archival data to provide a diverse spectrum of perceptions from which to compare, challenge and support conclusions emerging from one particular source of data. Crystallization increased the trustworthiness of my research, however, at the same time it supported the social constructivism approach adopted for this study. As Richardson (2000:934) notes, “crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic...paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know...we know there is always more to know”. Crystallization allowed me to gain a richer account of the setting and experiences of individuals, while embracing the subjectivity inherent in this process (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2002; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Janesick, 2000; Richardson, 2000).

4.3.1. Semi-Structured and Unstructured Interviews

Similar to Coupland (2001), I explored how individuals retrospectively constructed their work-based identities through engaging in conversations with them about their work experiences. The intent was to explore if and how individuals engaged in identity work through talking about their work (Watson, 1998). Adopting Watson’s (1997:141) view that we come to understand who we are to ourselves and others through interaction and engagement with others, as well as through “on-going achievement of conversations which go on ‘in our minds’”, I felt interviews conducted in a flexible, informal manner would be a suitable way through which to prompt and re-present how these individuals engage in a simultaneous process of talking and becoming. Rather than outlining to participants that I wanted

them to talk about their identities and how work informed their self-definitions, I felt it was more important to let their stories of identity construction surface more naturally (Alvesson, 2002). By this, I do not mean that I intended to ‘produce’ more objective accounts simply that this style of interviewing allowed more room to interpret how meanings were continually being re-constructed throughout the conversations (Mason, 2002). A semi-structured interview guide was used to facilitate this process. The interview guide drew upon broad themes of work experiences (McCracken, 1988), many of which were areas covered by researchers exploring sex workers and more specifically exotic dancers. For example, the motivations for starting and continuing dancing, as well as the strategies employed in securing dances, common themes in the existing literature, were used to construct the interview guide (cf., Boles and Garbin, 1974; Bruckert, 2002; Forsyth and Deshotels, 1998; Frenken et al., 1998; Skipper and McCaghy, 1970). Broad or grand tour (Spradley, 1979) questions were asked initially to allow participants the flexibility to tell their story (e.g., tell me how you became a dancer?). The questions were open-ended to encourage participants to describe their own experiences. The interview guide is reproduced in Appendix I.

Most interviews were with dancers, however, I also had the opportunity to converse with club managers, managing director and owner. These conversations offered a means through which to hear (or read) about the views of other employees in the workplace, as well as offer insight into how the organization attempted to ‘regulate’ dancers’ identity construction. These interviews also provided a deeper understanding of the history of the clubs, structure and competition situation. The ‘formal’ interviews with

managers were conducted on a one-on-one basis. The situations under which these were conducted varied. For example, one interview was conducted in the club before opening time with a few people working in the background. In another case, the interview was conducted while the manager was working with other managers and we were in the greeting area for customers. The informal meeting with the managing director and owner was unstructured and occurred in one of the owner's other clubs and at a restaurant.

All 'formal' interviews with the dancers, except one, were conducted in groups of two to four. This provided an opportunity to gauge interaction among participants. As noted by Madriz (2000), group interviews also provided a more relaxed context for participants thereby increasing the chance of spontaneous responses from members of the group. In addition, given that most interviews were conducted in restricted periods of time (e.g., while dancers were getting ready to work or between stage shows), group interviews also enabled me to collect large amounts of information in limited amounts of time. The settings under which the interviews were conducted proved challenging due to interruptions and distractions from loud music, other conversations and others interjecting comments in the interviews. At the same time, however, it did provide a more naturalistic setting. Interviewing in this context also allowed me to see additional elements of exotic dancing (e.g., relationships in the dressing rooms) and provided me with a level of comfort in the working environment.

It is important to note that although the structure of the interviews was relaxed and flexible (i.e., semi-structured and in groups), the close

proximity of the managers while the interviews were being conducted on many occasions may have imposed pressure for discretion or restricted the dancers' ability to be open when responding to particular questions (e.g., what kind of relationship do you have with the management?). Although sampling was not systematic I did try to interview a diverse range of participants based upon experience, age, and background to create space for different experiences (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2002). Snowballing has been used by other researchers investigating sex work sites (cf., Babbie, 1995; Forsyth and Deshotels, 1997, 1998; Wesley, 2002) and I used this technique to broaden the range of participants with which I interacted. For example, I often asked dancers if they knew of dancers that would be willing to be interviewed. Sometimes participants also encouraged other dancers to participate.

As advocated by McCracken (1988) and Mason (2002), 'data' collection and analysis were an iterative process. Two initial interviews were conducted (two groups of three individuals each) to determine the appropriateness of the interview guide and uncover emerging themes. During these initial interviews dancers discussed house rules and housemother; two ideas not in my interview guide or considered by me during the process. Subsequently, I received a copy of the house rules and asked the managers and other dancers about the role and experiences with housemothers. I also added several questions to the semi-structured interview guide to prompt dancers' to discuss their emotion work, relations with others, type of work performed, and how and if the organization intervened in their public and private lives (e.g., how do you feel about work, does your job affect your life outside of work, does your job affect

your relationships with your partners). It was also during one of the first interviews in discussing socialization one individual mentioned ‘confidence courses’ (i.e., pole dancing schools). As a result of this discussion, I received more information from one the managers and the company website and enrolled in a one-day pole dancing course. These experiences are discussed later under Participant-observation.

In total twenty four individuals were ‘formally’ interviewed in a semi-structured format, twenty one dancers and three managers, both in Newcastle (13 interviews) and London (11 interviews). All interviews, with the exception of two, were taped and transcribed verbatim. The ‘formal’ interviews with dancers ranged in duration from approximately thirty minutes to one hour. The ‘formal’ interviews with managers also ranged from approximately thirty minutes to one hour in duration. ‘Formal’ interviews produced 238 pages of transcribed typed text in double-spaced format and 46,128 words of text.

On many occasions I also had the opportunity to have follow-up, unstructured interviews with individuals during nights of observation. These interviews offered a means through which to dig deeper into individuals’ accounts and engage in a more ethnographic experience. Follow-up unstructured interviews ranged from five to thirty minute conversations. Field notes taken from follow-up unstructured interviews are described under Participant-observation in the next section.

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 highlight the participant profile for these interviews (not including the managing director and owner). The dancers interviewed had

varied experience in the industry. For example, some had only worked at *FYEO* while others had worked in a variety of different establishments (e.g., local and international). In addition, some dancers had varied experience in the nature of their employment arrangements. Some had worked previously at gigs arranged via agencies, rather than through a club. Other individuals had varied experience in the type of dancing they had performed (e.g., completely nude, topless only, theatrical shows). There was also considerable range in the length of time they had been dancers, from two months to six years. The age of participants ranged from 19 to 31 years old. All managers interviewed were male. Although the club in London did have one female manager (the club in Newcastle had all male management), as noted in the interviews with the male managers, female managers in the industry are rare. Unfortunately, I did not interview the female manager in London as she was not available to be interviewed at the times I visited the site.

DANCERS							
Name for Research Purposes	Age	Period of Time as a Dancer	Previous Experience	Location of Work Presently	Expected Duration in Industry	Formal Interview	Informal Interview
Maggie	20	1 yr	Danced in other establishments – e.g. Birmingham / Ibiza	FYEO - Newcastle	1-2 years (until finished university program)	Group (of three)	Two occasions
Tian	20	6 mths	Only at present location	FYEO - Newcastle	1 –2 years (until finished university program)	Group (of three)	Two occasions
Ivy	22	2.5 yrs	Danced in other establishments – e.g. London	FYEO - Newcastle	1 year (in later interview indicated 6 mths more)	Group (of three)	Three occasions
Lana	25	4 yrs	Danced in other establishments – various (started by stripping)	FYEO - Newcastle	Unsure but not permanently	Group (of three)	None
Carrie	20	1 yr	Danced in other establishments – e.g. Paris, Birmingham	FYEO - Newcastle	3 years	Group (of three)	One occasion
Lesley	23	6 yrs	Danced in other establishments – various (started by stripping)	FYEO - Newcastle	Unsure – not permanently	Group (of three)	Four occasions
Sam	25	2.5 yrs	Danced in other establishments – only FYEO	FYEO – South Hampton	Unsure – not permanently	Individual	None
Ronnie	24	2 mths	Only at present location	FYEO – London	3 mths	Group (of two)	One occasion
Lisa	25	7 mths	Only at present location	FYEO – London	Unsure – until she had saved £10,000	Group (of two)	None
Anna	26	1 yr	Danced in other establishments (mostly outside England, e.g. Tokyo)	FYEO - Newcastle	For another year to save for car and house payment (has a limit she wants to reach)	Group (of two)	None

DANCERS							
Name for Research Purposes	Age	Period of Time as a Dancer	Previous Experience	Location of Work Presently	Expected Duration in Industry	Formal Interview	Informal Interview
Amy	19	8 mths	Danced in other establishments (e.g. Paris, London)	FYEO - Newcastle	Until she finishes university	Group (of two)	None
Michelle	21	2 yrs	Danced at other establishments (e.g. Rhino and in US) and presently dancing at other places while at FYEO	FYEO – London and Other Establishments in London	8 – 10 yrs	Group (of four)	None
Angie	19	3 mths	Only at present location	FYEO - London	As long as she is a student	Group (of four)	None
Rona	21	3 mths	Only at present location	FYEO - London	As long as she is a student	Group (of four)	None
Karen	23	1 yr	Didn't comment	FYEO - London	Didn't comment	Group (of four)	None
Nancy	21	14 mths	Only at present location (worked there as waitress first)	FYEO - Newcastle	Until she goes back to university in five months	Group (of three)	One occasion
Denise	19	4.5 mths	Only at present location	FYEO - Newcastle	As long as she is a student and while at first 'real' job	Group (of three)	One occasion
Frankie	22	4 mths	Abroad and only table dancing	FYEO - Newcastle	Temporary to pay bills	Group (of three)	One occasion
Alex	31	1 yr	Only at present location but a professional dancer as well	FYEO - London	Unsure	Group (of three)	One occasion
Trina	21	4 wks	Only at present location	FYEO - London	Unsure	Group (of three)	One occasion
Sheena	27	1 yr	Only at present location	FYEO - London	Unsure – as long as she enjoys it	Group (of three)	None

Table 4.1. Participant Profile of Dancers

MANAGERS					
Name for Research Purposes	Location	No. of Managers at Location	Period of Time at Location	Previous Experience in Industry	Formal / Informal Interviews
Terry	FYEO - Newcastle	3	18 mths – since opened	Nil	Formal Informal (five occasions)
Jim	FYEO - London	3 - 5	9 years with various FYEOs	9 years with various FYEOs and in other capacities (other organizations, running an agency)	Formal
Derek	FYEO - London	3 - 5	8 months	4 years in clubs in the US	Formal

Table 4.2. Participant Profile of Managers

4.3.2. Participant-observation

Participant-observation is premised on the ethnographic experience (Jorgensen, 1989). Jorgensen (1989) describes participant observation as an appropriate choice for exploratory studies concerned with understanding human meaning and interactions. Jorgensen (1989) also highlights the influence of personal experience in the research process and the on-going

discovery of the research problem throughout the research. He draws upon Junker's (1960) and Gold's (1958) work in presenting four approaches to participant observation, namely, complete observer, participant-as-observer, an observer-as-participant, or complete participant. Complete observer was the initial approach adopted in this research. Upon becoming aware of pole dancing courses offered by *FYEO* in London, I shifted my approach more towards a participant-as-observer. Participant-as-observer is viewed as more observer than participant and this approach allowed me access to the mundane without the commitment of total immersion (Jorgensen, 1989).

4.3.2.1 Observation and Diary Notes

The interviews provided a solid base from which participants described experiences in their own words and surfaced stories of identity construction. I also complemented these accounts with periods of observation at the clubs. This allowed me to obtain a deeper familiarity with naturally occurring circumstances through observing the dancers, managers and customers on different occasions. Observations were gathered throughout the entire data collection process. I visited the clubs, in particular in Newcastle, sometimes interviewing dancers while other times just observing the setting and interactions in the club. Most of the time I did this alone, however, there were times I went to the club with friends. On occasions when friends accompanied me, I did not conduct any interviews and my research was restricted to observing. I also made an attempt to go at different times of the week to gauge the setting on nights that were generally not very busy (e.g., Monday / Tuesday) and nights that were generally very busy (e.g., Friday / Saturday). Most of the twenty-four semi-structured interviews were

conducted on less busy nights, although my observations and unstructured conversations with dancers occurred during both busy and less busy times. Upon reflection, I do not think the timing of my interviews affected the interview material I collected, other than dancers usually had more time to talk to me on less busy nights. Observation notes on busier nights provided a slightly different picture because there were more dancers working on a shift, dancers changed their outfits more frequently and the club atmosphere was less intimate (e.g., louder, customers in closer contact with each other because seating areas were near full capacity). Observation and subsequent diary writing (which occurred generally within one to three hours of the observation), served as a source of material of descriptive events, as well as a record of my interpretation of events at the time. Illustrative of the power of the tenets of ethnographic research, repeated exposure through observation allowed me to become more at ease in the setting and thus observe the same settings differently, or perhaps more closely. For example, diary notes describing the physical surroundings of the club recorded on the first night of observation differed from those recorded on the third night of observation. The stage was located in a different place than I initially recorded. In addition, the seating area was larger and organized differently than I first experienced. In reflecting upon this, I recalled being anxious on the first night I had visited the club about finding the club, the atmosphere of the club and whether or not any dancers would be willing to be interviewed. The differences in my descriptions can be partially explained by my anxiousness. I also think it can be explained by my increasing level of comfort with the surroundings and I therefore began to pick up on different cues.

In addition to ongoing observations that occurred throughout the data collection period, I also enrolled in a one-day pole dancing course. The total time spent observing at the clubs, including time spent completing the pole dancing course, was approximately fifty hours accumulated during eighteen visits over a six-month period (March to August 2003). These 50 hours are in addition to the time spent formally interviewing dancers and managers. *FYEO* in London offered a variety of options for those interested in pole dancing. I decided to take the one-day crash course due to the traveling requirements involved in the other options (e.g., diploma course occurred over a three week period). I had several motives for participating in the course. First, actually learning some pole tricks and participating in a stage show of sorts meant I constructed my own lived experiences about what working as an exotic dancing might involve. I wanted to explore how I would feel about the variety of experiences that would be involved, not only in taking the course, but as well as in thinking about what dancing would mean to me. The atmosphere was different than a regular night for dancers (e.g., no customers), however, the class was held in the club and we were exposed to similar structural settings as the dancers. Secondly, by enrolling in the course it afforded me some sense of the socialization process of dancers. Interestingly, however, both the course coordinator and the instructor noted only one-third of those who enrol in the courses go on to dance professionally.

During the session we were introduced to some basic stage moves and pole tricks and received a *Pole and Tableside Dancing School Manual*. It detailed a 'Question and answer' section (e.g., Is it possible to flirt on stage?), as well as a variety of other sections including, 'What makes a great

dancer', 'Guests', 'Pole and stage dancing', 'Tableside dancing', and 'Engagement'. This manual served as a rich source of material for exploring the performative nature of the work. This secondary information helped illuminate the organization as a resource to be drawn upon in individual identity construction.

In total fourteen participants, as well as **Sam**, the instructor, and the coordinator were present at the pole dancing course. I conversed with as many of the participants as possible and asked them about their motives and experiences. All individuals that I spoke with were aware of my role as student-researcher. The group was diverse. Participants ranged in age from 19 to about 45 years. In addition, motivations for enrolling in the course varied. Of the ten participants I interacted with only three or four of them had any interest in pursuing dancing. For example, **Maxine** indicated she was starting university in the fall and wanted a job that paid more than restaurant work. She had enrolled to see if it was something she could do physically, as well as emotionally. **Janita**, **Emile** and **Kristy** also expressed some serious interest in finding out what it involved and how they could go about auditioning. The motivations of the other participants varied from **Janice's** husband giving her a gift certificate as a birthday present, to **Michelle** who was there to build her confidence, to **Karen** who was there to see if it would be an interesting event for a bridal party.

Overall, the pole dancing course added to the diversity of my experiences. My conversations with other participants and **Sam** did offer some interesting descriptions for my diary (e.g., the work was physically demanding, **Sam** indicated alcohol reduced the initial anxiety often

experienced by dancers). The experience, however, left me wanting more in regards to simulating the experiences of a dancer. The class was very relaxed, clubs lights were left on and only a few techniques were covered during the session. A diploma course may have provided a more intense experience than the crash course.

My diary included field notes from ongoing observations, the pole dancing course and general notes about the research project (e.g., reminders, reflections). Detailed descriptions of what happened on particular occasions, my own feelings and interpretations of particular events and my analytical ideas were recorded. As recommended by Mason (2002), the diary allowed me to engage in both interpretative and reflexive readings. Field notes were written between one to three hours of the observation occurring. On other occasions, notes were written if particular thoughts or insights occurred sometime after a particular incident. For example, my notes recorded for observation on May 3, 2003 included an insert added on May 17. On this particular night friends of mine accompanied me to the club and it was a time when I struggled with my roles as researcher, customer, perhaps even friend, in the cultural site. I was bothered that a friend with me asked for a dance from a dancer I had previously interviewed formally and informally several times (although my friend was unaware of my relationship with the dancer). Later, I asked my friend why he had asked this particular dancer and I explained why I was uncomfortable with his decision to do. I felt it conflicted with my role as researcher and jeopardized the trust I had developed with this participant. Reflecting upon the particular situation I went back to my notes and added further comments.

Some of these notes were typed and others handwritten. The typed notes totalled 32 double-spaced pages of text and approximately 11,000 words. Using the typed notes as a guide, it is estimated that in total 14,000 to 17,000 words were recorded in diary notes. Overall, the diary served as another means through which I could access a diverse range of descriptions, experiences and reflections, my own and those of participants.

4.3.3. Analyzing Interview Text and Participant-Observation Experiences

Consistent with my qualitative methodology, data collection and analysis were interdependent and iterative in nature for this research project. Drawing on the tenets of ethnography (Schwartzman, 1993), the long interview (McCracken, 1988) and constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000); an ongoing process of discovery characterized the research. As each interview was transcribed I began a “rummaging” (McCracken, 1988:33) process that entailed reading and re-reading of the transcript to categorize story content. At this stage I did not want to link the primary material collected to the extant literature. In some respects, I tried to disengage myself from the extant literature to experience a fresh reading of the transcripts. Overall, I moved from a process of filtering material into broad themes, to a refinement stage of filtering themes into more meaningful concepts, to a final stage of comparing concepts and grouping related concepts as categories (McCracken, 1988).

Each interview transcript was first examined individually. Text was sorted into broad themes (e.g., Socialization / Recruitment / Selection, Motivations, Nature of Job) that were reflective of the discussion, prior to

drawing any conclusions about the relationships among themes in each text or between texts. At this stage, I tried not to mirror the same group of themes (i.e., labels) as identified in the first transcript in the reading of subsequent transcripts. The labels used were broad to minimize the exclusion of data that might have occurred by combining data into categories at this early stage.

I then began a process of constant comparison (Charmaz, 2000; Corbin and Strauss, 1990) across themes and across interview transcripts, observation notes, corporate documents (e.g., house rules), pole dancing manual and observation of an online pole dancing discussion site (*My Pole Forum* @ www.mypole.co.uk). At this point the initial themes were revisited and more meaningful concepts began to emerge. For example, one concept that emerged at this stage was *Tenure* (e.g., high turnover, stepping stone, temporary). This concept had previously been ‘categorized’ under *Nature of Job*, *Motivations*, and *Career*.

To engage with the multiplicity of identity construction I explored how participants conveyed thoughts, feelings, and experiences in different ways (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2002). For the purpose of this research, *voices* were viewed as the stories of individuals stemming from their subjective experiences. Through these stories we can hear (or read) how individuals convey thoughts, feelings and actions in different ways that are meaningful to them and others (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2002). Through these voices *identity roles* are constructed (Alvesson, 2000). These identity roles serve as labels or categories through which individuals and others order and make their experiences intelligible (Hall, 2000, Jenkins, 1996). In re-presenting

these voices I am wary of the dangers of 'fixing' and excluding individuals through these identity roles or categories (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2002; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002; Watson, 1998). The identity roles constructed in this thesis, however, serve as a sense making heuristic to understand the complex and contradictory nature of work-based identity. They are not meant to generalize or lock participants into stable, fixed identities.

In interpreting how these voices and identity roles were constructed and negotiated, I looked deeper at the connections between these different voices, corporate documents and newspaper archives that emerged. It was at this stage that I began to construct a more complex story of identity construction than most of the extant literature on work-based identity. Multiple levels of interacting forces played a role in how these individuals (and I) co-constructed work-based identity. For example, political and social forces evident in legislation changes permitting fully nude dancing, as well as controversial municipal decisions to grant licenses (e.g., city counsellors protesting on behalf of various interest groups' concerns including the exploitation of women and increasing criminal activity in affected areas) helped explained some of the talk and becoming of participants' stories. Religious and moral factors also played a role in the construction and pervasiveness of some voices. Some participants discussed how they were selective in disclosing details about what their job entailed, especially to their parents. Strong christian denominational stances were provided as the reason for this nondisclosure. Economic issues also influenced individuals' decisions to dance and continue to dance (e.g., lack of other options that matched the earning potential of dancing). Furthermore, relational issues (e.g., with partners, other dancers) also played a role in how participants

viewed the work they performed, themselves and others. Given the complexity of the relationships among these themes that emerged I struggled with how all of these factors could be ‘managed’ in constructing identity at work. Fusing insights from the literatures on emotion work and identity, dirty work and identity, identity regulation as organization control and social identity offered a useful heuristic through which to capture these processes.

At this stage, I decided that the trustworthiness of my thesis story on work-based identity could be enhanced through exploring secondary sources beyond participants’ stories and corporate documents. My intent was not to re-construct a genealogical account of the positioning of sex work or exotic dancing as Brewis and Linstead (2000), Hollway (1989) and Rubin (1993) had done. A thorough analysis of popular press archives over a one-year period, however, did produce interesting and novel insights in how institutional resources (social, cultural, historical) might play a role in the individual’s identity construction. Although the analysis of newspapers archives occurred after the interviewing process, the two processes become intertwined in making sense of identity construction as a complex process of interacting forces. Chapter Five details the interpretation of the newspaper archival material and Chapter Six depicts how I have made sense of dancers’ and managers’ stories, as well as archival material as processes of identity construction.

4.3.4. Analyzing Newspaper Archives

Similar to Wicks' (2002) work that explored miner identity formation and reproduction through a case study of a colliery in Nova Scotia, Canada through an institutional theory lens, I drew upon UK newspaper archives to explore how the images of exotic dancing as a form of work, exotic dancing establishments and exotic dancers were being constructed. Newspaper articles were collected through LexisNexus database. I used the search words 'pole dancing', 'lap dancing', 'table dancing', 'tableside dancing', 'exotic dancing' and '*For Your Eyes Only*' to search UK newspapers for a one-year period (2004). Articles included in this analysis were those that referred specifically to exotic dancing in some way. Articles covering the sex industry generally might have also provided insight into the political, social and cultural undercurrents influencing exotic dancing and those employed in the industry. However, I felt narrowing the search in this way would provide a clearer focus upon issues specific and perhaps unique to exotic dancing. Letters from readers or articles about Britons outside of the UK were not included. In total 215 articles were determined to be of relevance. These articles ranged in length from 200 to 3,000 words. Analysis of this data is described in Chapter Five. Appendix II provides a list of sources used for this analysis.

I also conducted a broader search on *FYEO* to gain a better understanding of issues surrounding the opening of the Newcastle club in 2001 and emerging issues surrounding the club. This material supplemented the material I had gathered on the company from corporate documents and primary accounts.

Similar to the process conducted on the primary data and other secondary data, I examined each newspaper narrative separately and explored themes that emerged. Initially, 80 themes were identified across this data. A closer examination indicated similarities and overlap across themes. As a result, themes were categorized to produce more meaningful concepts. In the end concepts were grouped into six categories. To emphasize the fluid and pervasive nature of these categories, they were labelled discourses. The term 'discourse' is used in a variety of ways (Schiffrin, Tannen and Hamilton, 2003). It is not the intent of this thesis to debate the meaning(s) or use of discourse in understanding organizational life. I draw partially upon Sveningsson and Alvesson's (2003:1171/2) use of the term to refer to "a way of reasoning (form of logic), with certain truth effects through its impact on practice, anchored in a particular vocabulary that constitutes a particular version of the social world". I understand discourse to be a form of reasoning that involves selecting, filtering, processing and constructing information (e.g., text, conversation, relationships, culture) to make sense of particular phenomena. This way of reasoning is constituted by both ideological and structural elements. Through repetition, mass production, and utilization of different medium, ideas informed by a particular form of reasoning (discourse) become more powerful. Discourse links individual (and group) thought, language and behaviour and informs what we come to understand and enact as 'truth'. Discourses are embedded, yet at the same time they are constantly shifting and changing. Some discourses, however, are more embedded than others and thus more persuasive and pervasive upon individual, group and institutional thought and action. Discourses are active, alive and creating. I will refer to these 'truths' as 'messages' or 'ideas', rather than 'truths' given my discomfort with portraying the

findings from my one-year analysis of popular press narratives as embedded knowledge. At the same time, my view of discourse does not mean that the individual is 'powerless' as a 'subject' of the discourse. In analysing the popular press accounts of exotic dancing, my intent was to offer a glimpse into how particular discourses might play a role in individual dancers' retrospective identity construction. My application of discourse is indeed narrow in that I explore how one form of media over a one-year period constructs exotic dancing, exotic dancing establishments and those individuals associated with the industry. These discourses may or may not be linked to broader and deeper ways of understanding the social world.

Overall, this analysis offered a means through which to explore how macro forces (e.g., social, political, cultural) might play a role in work-based identity. Together with the primary data, this analysis increased the overall trustworthiness of my research and the alternative theoretical lens employed. The discussion of the discourses and *FYEO* activities and organizational identity is presented in Chapter Five before the stories of dancers in Chapter Six. This offers the reader a context from which to make sense of the retrospective identity construction of the dancers interviewed.

4.4. Ethical Considerations

Prior to conducting any primary information, ethical approval for the research was sought through the University Ethics Committee at Saint Mary's University, Nova Scotia, Canada (original institution of enrolment). All participants were provided with an information letter detailing the purpose of the research. In this letter, participants were informed that their

identities would be protected through the use of pseudonyms in the document. The names of all participants involved in this study have been changed to ensure their anonymity, unless I refer to published secondary data. Participants could also withdraw from the interviews at any point during the process. The organization expressed no concern with the collection of information on company premises or the use of the name of company in written / published material.

Ethical considerations that emerged during or after the completion of the data collection (during reflection) were categorized into three broad areas including, safety of researcher, impact on participants' (i.e., dancers') well-being, and acting in good faith with company information. In regards to the former, travelling to any club in city centres alone at night could entail safety risks, regardless if the motivation is research related or not. Coupled with this, I was unfamiliar, at least initially, with both cities in which I was collecting data. The Newcastle club was located at the end of a street with only a few street lights. On this street there were no other establishments open during the hours I frequented the club, thus it was virtually a deserted area. This initially caused me some concern, however, there was a police station located on the corner of the next street and I always carried a cell phone in case of emergencies. I also became more comfortable in the city as time passed. In London safety issues also stemmed from public transport and walking in areas unfamiliar at night alone. I did not have anyone in London I could call in case of an emergency and my concerns associated with travel in London played a role in the decision to focus upon the club in Newcastle for most of the 'data' collection. At no point, however, did I feel at risk in the clubs. The management and dancers were always friendly and

helpful. Furthermore, I never experienced or witnessed disruptive behaviour from customers in the clubs that made me uneasy.

In reflecting upon the research process and the impact upon participants, I wondered how the collection of my 'data' might have affected the well-being of the dancers involved in the study. Firstly, I was cognizant of how some of the questions I asked might have an impact on dancers' sense of job security if they responded in particular ways (e.g., What kind of relationship do you have with your boss? How does this compare with other places you have worked?). Before and during interviews I explained that the research was related to my PhD research so that dancers did not feel threatened by how the material would be used (e.g., for management purposes). It was clear from some of the accounts that dancers had virtually no job security (e.g., self-employed, no benefits, no real employment contract). As a result, they were cautious about how they speak to managers in order to keep their jobs. With interviews conducted on the premises in dressing rooms (which in London were two rooms without doors, located on a frequently used corridor) dancers were likely careful about what they said about these relationships. Most of the comments that could have caused some discomfort for management, however, arose from informal conversations with dancers while working on the club floor. At these times, the music was loud and there was little risk of being overheard by other dancers or management. In addition, in interviewing managers at no point did I make reference to incidents described by dancers that might have given management an impression that dancers were saying negative comments about management or the club more generally. I encouraged the managers to describe their own accounts of the club activities, rather than their

perspectives based upon the same events described by dancers. Secondly, I wondered if my research had any psychological impact upon the dancers I interviewed. This was not something I had really considered in the design of the study. Participation was voluntary (e.g., even the club managers indicated that they had no influence over the dancers to encourage them to participate) and dancers were made aware that they could withdraw from the interview at any point. Many dancers refused to be interviewed. Most dancers interviewed appeared eager almost to tell their stories. Some individuals described how they struggled with what they did, how they felt about themselves, customers, industry and the influence their work has had upon their relationships with others. From my encounters with these individuals, it did not appear to be the first time they toyed with these concerns. Furthermore, the interview structure was flexible and I adopted a non-obtrusive approach so that topics discussed were those mostly stemming from the participant's discussion, rather than from me prying into areas that the individual felt uncomfortable discussing. I do not think participants experienced any psychological harm as a result of my research, however, the accounts described by those few dancers that had become emotionally detached from people in their lives they considered important because of their work unsettled me.

The other area of concern stemmed from how I presented and used company information. Through a colleague at the institution where I was working at the time of data collection, I became acquainted with the individual who handled public relations for *FYEO*. She arranged a meeting with me to discuss my research and later arranged a meeting for me with both the managing director and owner of the clubs. The owner of the club was

informed of the objectives of my research and was completely unconcerned with me interviewing managers or dancers at the club. The company's public relations advisor asked me to consider writing a piece on my research for the press. I was upfront with the owner and the public relations advisor that the presentation of my findings may not have reflected the views of management. I considered the request of writing a piece on my research, however, I was uncomfortable thinking about how the press might portray my findings once it was in the media. In the end, I declined the offer. The owner and managing director also approved for me to have complete access for future research to the owners' new exotic dancing club that opened recently in Newcastle, *Blue Velvet*. Although the owner of the club was in no way concerned with the results of present study, I decided not to collect data at the other club until after the completion of this research.

4.5. Establishing Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985:290) contend trustworthiness is about how a researcher "persuades his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of the inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?" They discuss four questions typically used to assess the trustworthiness of a research process and outcomes. They re-interpret these questions to fit more closely with qualitative inquiry. The first question pertains to the *credibility* of the research or, in other words, how can I establish confidence or a level of comfort with my retelling of the story as that which was heard (or read) in the stories of those interviewed? The second question addresses the issue of applicability or, in other words, to what extent are the findings applicable or *transferable* to other contexts? The third question is one of consistency.

This requires researchers to ask themselves how can I determine whether the findings would be repeated if carried out again, or how *dependable* are my findings? The last question is one of confirmability. How can the researcher establish that the stories are *confirmable* or not? The first two questions of credibility and transferability were deemed appropriate ways through which to persuade myself and others that this story about identity at work was indeed trustworthy. These two issues will be discussed below. The latter two questions that of dependability and confirmability, were not seen to be fitting criteria for the social constructivist approach used throughout the research. My acknowledgement of the co-construction and re-presentation of the stories I heard and the emphasis upon my own lived experiences meant assessing this research on the basis of dependability and confirmability, at least as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985), would have contradicted the research paradigm I adopted. My ontological and epistemological assumptions concerning subjectivity, fluidity and contradiction did not align with research emphasizing dependability or confirmability. As a result, I decided to engage in epistemic reflexivity (Johnson and Duberley, 2003) as a means through which to embrace and critique my own subjectivity, as well as methodological reflexivity (Johnson and Duberley, 2003) to present a localized critique of the methodology and methods employed in the process. My understanding of reflexivity and how it was used as a means to establish trustworthiness is discussed later. My reflections on how I actually established trustworthiness in this research are discussed in detail in the final chapter of the thesis.

To demonstrate 'truth' value or credibility, Lincoln and Guba (1985) contend the researcher commits to re-presenting the multiple constructions

adequately through convincing audiences that the re-constructions arrived at are credible to the constructors of the multiple realities. The process of moving from the stories heard (or read) should be transparent to accomplish a sense of credibility in the re-constructions. In this research, crystallization of methods over a period of time facilitated this process.

In determining the transferability of this research, the responsibility of the researcher lies in providing enough descriptive data so that similarity judgements can be made by others (not the researcher) (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The onus is upon the audience to determine the extent to which they feel the findings of one project transfer to other projects. At the same time, however, part of my research inquiry entailed exploring how looking at alternative sites of organizing could present different ways of understanding well-studied phenomena. My insights on this are discussed in Chapter Eight of the thesis.

In adopting a radical reflexive approach to unsettling the discipline and practice of strategic management, Grandy and Mills (2004) contend reflexivity is a contested concept. It was not the intent of this research to debate the various conceptualizations and types of reflexivity. I adopted an interpretation of reflexivity that entails a critical engagement with one's own voices and that of others (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). This involved becoming suspicious of my own assumptions and reflecting and critiquing my own identities and lived experiences (Czarniawska, 1998; Ellis and Flaherty, 1993; Pels, 2000). To do this, I engaged in a process of epistemic and methodological reflexivity (Johnson and Duberley, 2003).

Johnson and Duberley (2003) explain epistemic reflexivity as a process whereby the researcher engages with their own social location and how that affects the form and outcomes of the research. It also involves an acceptance that there are always multiple 'valid' accounts of the same phenomenon. In this way, reflexivity was a means through which to explore and interpret myself as a subjective individual. As noted by Czarniawska (1998), Kleinman and Copp (1993) and Warren and Hackney (2000), the multiplicity and fluidity of our own identities mean we are under scrutiny in the research process and that our identities develop, change, and conflict during these processes. "Ignoring the interplay of person and research ultimately has analytic costs" (Kleinman and Copp, 1993:10). In the final chapter I explore how my own fears, emotions, gender and identity questions before, during and after, shaped the research process. I explore questions of professional identity (e.g., Who saw me at the clubs and what did they think given the rules of professionalism associated with my academic job?), researcher identity (e.g., Did I fit in this context? Did the individuals trust my motives?), gender identity (e.g., How did I appear physically and sexually to these other women and men?), and national identity (e.g., Was I seen to be an outsider because of my Canadian accent? Was I seen to be an American?).

I also used methodological reflexivity as a means through which to explore how I engaged with a particular method or level of interpretation during the research process (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000; Johnson and Duberley, 2003). For example, in listening to the stories of participants I asked myself several questions. Why did I ask the questions I did? What did I overlook? Could I have done things differently? Johnson and Duberley (2003) argue

methodological reflexivity is aligned more with a commitment to objectivity (and thus validity, reliability). I argue that given my social constructivist approach, on its own methodological reflexivity would offer only a surface level attempt to establish trustworthiness in the research. However, coupled with epistemic reflexivity, credibility and transferability I feel that I have established and demonstrated trustworthiness in my research.

4.6. Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I began with a discussion of how lived experience was at the heart of this research. An epistemology grounded in subjectivism and an ontology grounded in process and movement, led me to social constructivism as a means through which to explore how the subjective individual makes sense of her identity at work given various social institutions interacting in this process. I described how a qualitative methodology, drawing upon the tenets of ethnography, facilitated my ability to develop a level of comfort with the mundane aspects of organizational life and identity construction. The multiple method approach employed was noted as a means through which I captured thick accounts of identity construction. Moreover, the iterative process involved in collecting and analyzing stories of identity construction stories was described. Throughout this discussion I presented myself as a subjective individual to demonstrate how my understanding of social constructivism was an ongoing consideration in the research process. In this chapter, I also discussed the ethical protocols and considerations that surfaced, as well as developed a framework for establishing trustworthiness in this research process.

In the next three chapters I present my interpretations of identity at work for the group of exotic dancers employed at *FYEO* discussed in this chapter. These interpretations are informed by the epistemology, ontology, methodology and methods described in this chapter. To provide context, in the next chapter firstly I explore how *FYEO* constructs its organizational identity, and how exotic dancing, exotic dancing establishments and exotic dancers are constructed through a particular form of media. Chapter Five provides the necessary descriptive material of institutional forces so the reader becomes comfortable with the localities of the industry and club. From here, primary accounts of the processes of identity construction and identity roles are described in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven.

Chapter 5

Discourses and Organizational Identity

5. Introduction

As argued in Chapter Two, to date very little has been done conceptually or empirically to link the different elements (e.g., social, political, organizational, social relations, agency) that play a role in how the individual makes sense of her work-based identity. This chapter sets out to contextualise work-based identity in relation to various macro resources that the individual *might* draw upon in constructing her work-based identities. First, the chapter presents several discourses emerging from the analysis of popular press archives over a one-year period. These discourses are not presented as the only media discourses circulating, nor are they necessarily reflective of discourses evident through other macro realms. What these discourses do illustrate is how forces outside of organizational life position exotic dancing, exotic dancing establishments and those working in the industry in a particular way. This in turn, offers a means through which to understand the retrospective identity construction as heard (or read) in the stories of dancers re-presented in Chapter Six. Second, through archival (e.g., popular press, corporate documents) and primary (e.g., interviews with managers) accounts, a description of the activities and operations of *FYEO* are described in this chapter. Building upon this, the construction of *FYEO*'s organizational identity is discussed. Here we begin to see how organizational identity interacts with the discourses enveloping organizational life as evident through the media analysis, as well as how

FYEO attempts to regulate individual identity construction as a form of organizational control.

5.1. Discourses

For the purposes of this thesis, I use ‘discourse’ to refer to a form of reasoning that involves selecting, filtering, processing and constructing information to make sense of particular phenomena. The particular way of reasoning is constituted by both ideological and structural elements. Discourse links individual (and group) thought, language and behaviour and informs what we come to understand and enact as ‘truth’. Discourses are embedded, yet at the same time they are constantly shifting and changing. Through a process of constant filtering of the narratives reproduced in the popular press over a one-year period, I have identified several discourses that position exotic dancing, exotic dancing establishments and those working in the industry in a particular way. These are, a discourse of *Public (Dis)Order*, a discourse of *Criminality*, a discourse of *Deviance and Immorality*, a discourse of *Art and Entertainment*, a discourse of *Growth*, and a discourse of *Surveillance*.

5.1.1. Discourse of Public (Dis)Order

In many of the narratives, exotic dancing is presented as a risk to public order, evoking public disapproval and fear. Exotic dancing establishments negatively impact community reputation and threaten the safety of residents. Through this discourse of public (dis)order clubs are seen to damage community image and reputation to such an extent that residents will leave

the community and visitors will re-consider visiting. In response to a license approval for a club in Ripley, Derbyshire a local vicar indicates not only will customers suffer from using the clubs, the negative impact of such activities will extend to the economy as a whole and the social integrity of the town (Dismay at lap dance approval, 2004). In a similar vein, a minister from Nottingham voices concern over the approval of a club in the area by noting, "I think it's wrong for the city, it's the wrong image and it doesn't help us respect Nottingham" (Bevan, 2004:8). Exotic dancing clubs are seen to be source of community disruption and a burden upon local policing authorities. In July, a Twickenham club's request for extended opening hours during weekdays was rejected on the grounds that the noise would be disruptive to the community and place added pressure on police (Farquharson, 2004). In August, a Constable in Mansfield objects to the licensing of a lap dancing club in the area, "believing it will create an adverse affect on public order" (Marley, 2004:11). Moreover, references are made about the threat of declining property value for residents and retailers of areas populated by clubs (cf., Braiden, 2004; Jones, 2004; Murray, 2004; Woolcock, 2004). Community groups respond sharply to the risk of public disorder, damage to community reputation and decline of real estate value that is seen to follow the introduction of clubs. Various interest groups including, religious groups, university student groups and women's rights groups protest the licensing of clubs. In some cases, objectors go through great efforts to make their point. Some protesters initiated a 'name and shame' campaign to demonstrate their objections to the licensing of new clubs. With talks of new clubs opening in Glasgow in September 2004, these protestors threaten to go to the clubs on opening night and take pictures of those entering the clubs (Dickson, 2004). Later these pictures are

posted to a website in an attempt to humiliate and deter individuals from frequenting clubs.

The discourse of public (dis)order also evokes emotions of fear. Exotic dancing is dangerous, likely to cause pain or unpleasant outcomes, and threaten the safety of vulnerable individuals. Most significant are references made about the welfare of children. The clubs are positioned as a risk to lure unaware, young adults into the activities (cf., Cronin, 2004; Sandall, 2004). In turn, the innocence of youth is threatened. In November, a pole dancing class targeted at youths as a source of physical fitness in Birmingham was cancelled due to outraged parents. A local councillor comments, “this sort of thing is not suitable for 11-years-olds. For a start I’m not sure how you’d take the sexual element out of pole dancing and children are bound to want to know more about the adult version...it’s still nice to try and keep a little bit of innocence in our children’s lives” (Hendrick, 2004:1). In addition, the location of clubs is often highlighted as inappropriate. In some cases, clubs are considered to be located too closely to schools. Given the criminality associated with these clubs (see discourse of criminality discussed next), the safety of children may be in jeopardy. In February, an application for a club license in Chorley was refused on the basis that the proposed location would mean children walk by it on a regular basis (Cronin, 2004). Presenting exotic dancing as a risk to the well being of children strikes right to the core of most parents. If there is ‘evidence’ to suggest in some way children may be in danger, the reaction of most is to respond with vigour and passion. Safety is also a concern more generally as well. Some narratives make reference to the risk posed to dancers working in clubs (cf., *Nude dancing club gets the green light*, 2004), as well as to the community in general

through increased incidence of violence (cf., Sex dancers get go-ahead, 2004; Mcmillan, 2004). In evoking fear the public is more likely to lobby for the eradication of exotic dancing clubs, rather than seek to improve the workplace conditions of dancers or gain a better appreciation of the complexity of issues surrounding the industry. Overall, through emphasising the negative impact upon community image and reputation, real estate value, community services (e.g., policing), and safety, exotic dancing poses a risk to public order, thus a discourse of public (dis)order emerges.

5.1.2. Discourse of Criminality

Through the media narratives, exotic dancing is also portrayed as unlawful and thus dangerous, dishonest and worthy of suspicion. The discourse of criminality emerges through accounts about clubs not adhering to the 'no touching' rule as prescribed by operating licenses. As a result, club licenses are revoked or not renewed. In addition, several narratives detail the employment of illegal immigrants and underage dancers in clubs (cf., Cullen, 2004; Lane, 2004; Mowling, 2004). In February, media attention was drawn to clubs in Dublin where 10 operators and owners of four clubs face 95 charges among them (Ward, 2004). Nearly all of the charges are in reference to the Employment Permits Act and employing dancers without legal documentation to work in Ireland. Another two stories detail accounts of dancers not reporting their earnings accurately for income tax purposes (Taking down particulars, 2004; Wheeler, 2004). As a result, Inland Revenue are beginning to crack down upon the industry. The industry is

painted as inadequately regulated and dancers are portrayed as dishonest citizens unwilling to pay their dues to society.

Many of the stories, however, do not directly refer to exotic dancing as illegal. More often, illegal activities or individuals engaging in illegal activities are somehow indirectly linked to dancers, clubs or the industry in general. Owners and managers of clubs with criminal charges outstanding or convictions are emphasised. For example, owners or managers facing criminal charges for writing dud cheques, carrying concealed weapons and sawed off shotguns and money laundering are highlighted (cf., Club boss gets 7 years, 2004; Blacklock, 2004; McElgunn, 2004; Wells, 2004). This in turn, paints a picture of club owners and managers as non law-abiding citizens. Furthermore, it plants a seed of suspicion around activities associated with the clubs. Other references are made to the clubs serving as fronts for organized crime groups or as an outlet where individuals go to engage in criminal activities (cf., Blacklock, 2004; McElgunn, 2004). In April, a council member in Glasgow justifies his objections to lap dancing clubs by stating, “reports from America suggest a number of clubs are fronts for organised crime. That is why there is a clear danger surrounding these establishments” (Wilson, 2004:7). There is also one article that describes how an individual lost his unfair and constructive dismissal and disability discrimination case against his employer (Philp, 2004). The employer hired a surveillance team to monitor the employee’s activities. The employee was discovered to be engaging in various social activities not deemed appropriate for someone off on paid sick leave. One of these activities included visits to a lap dancing club. The worker is presented as someone taking the advantage of his employer and the social system, rather than the

hard working, loyal character that he should be. Taking this point further, one could infer from this that this individual is an exemplar of the type of person who frequents exotic dancing clubs, that is, individuals who are dishonest and 'lazy'.

The discourse of criminality also emerges through accounts made by clubs or dancers indicating that the industry is in fact 'not criminal' (e.g., McKenzie, 2004). In doing so, there is an acknowledgement of the criminal association attached to the work, thus sustaining the discourse of criminality enveloping exotic dancing. The stigma associated with criminal activities in general shifts to exotic dancing and those performing the work.

Many narratives link exotic dancing with criminal activities associated with other forms of sex work, thus illuminating the sameness of sex work. There are numerous references made to raids on lap dancing clubs that uncover sexual activities extending beyond the operating licenses of the clubs. Investigations into brothel activities include raids on lap dancing clubs as well (Two men quizzed over operation of brothels, 2004). A report in August on the sex trade in London identifies 66 lap dancing clubs that were offering sex to clients although the clubs' licenses did not permit such activities (8,000 sex slave toll, 2004). The discourse of criminality draws upon the stigmatized position that other forms of sex work (e.g., prostitution, pornography) seem to hold. This intensifies the marginalized and tainted position of exotic dancing by associating it with other forms of sex work. In essence, all sex work is alike and it is bad. The pervasiveness of the sameness of sex can be seen in the narratives of clubs and dancers that actively refute the sameness of sex work (e.g., 'not prostitution').

5.1.3. Discourse of Deviance and Immorality

The discourse of deviance and immorality positions exotic dancing as activity that departs from societal norms, in regards to both social and sexual behaviour. It is seen to be dishonourable, unpleasant and unclean in some way. Dancers, clubs and / or the activities assumed to be occurring within the industry are often described as seedy and sleazy. Some of the accounts voice an alternative position, that is, exotic dancing as ‘not seedy’ (cf., Club boss laps up changing times, 2004). In doing this, however, it constructs and sustains a message about exotic dancing as seedy. Other related terms associated with the industry include, disgust, freakish, not normal, risqué, dirty and tacky.

Similarly, exotic dancing is recounted to stand in opposition to standards of behaviour considered good or acceptable, according to many norms of Western religion. In most cases, references to exotic dancing contrasts moral thoughts and actions, positioning it as evil and sinful. Exotic dancing is equated with inappropriate sexual activity, that is, sexual exchange outside of relationships, swinging, pornography and infidelity. For example, in March concerns are raised over the granting of temporary licenses for two clubs in Cheltenham during the National Hunt Festival (Unholy Row Over Table Dancers, 2004). A local pastor objects to the inappropriate sexual activity, as well as the consequences of “mixing sexual titillation and alcohol” (Unholy Row Over Table Dancers, 2004:23). The month before a pastor in Newcastle opposes *FYEO*’s application for extended operating hours on Sunday on the grounds that “these types of places exist to generate

physical desire...we need to understand there is a relationship between love and sex” (Mcmillan, 2004:14). Furthermore, in Basingstoke, in February, it is noted that members of the public link attendance to exotic dancing clubs with infidelity (Stamp, 2004). As well, attendance is linked to causing unnecessary sexual desire in men and in turn, these men will seek out sexual gratification in some way (cf., Sex dancers get go-ahead, 2004). Coupled with this, exotic dancing clubs are seen to undermine and destroy family life (cf., Cronin, 2004; Singh and Graham, 2004). As a result, clubs, owners, clients and dancers are tainted as immoral through association with these activities.

5.1.4. Discourse of Art and Entertainment

In contrast to the discourses of public (dis)order, criminality, and deviance and immorality, the discourse of art and entertainment constructs exotic dancing as current, popular and novel in nature. In doing this, there is a sense of acceptance that exotic dancing is a new fashion, a form of artistic expression, and a pleasurable and upscale form of entertainment.

There are numerous narratives about celebrities (of varying degrees and mostly males) visiting lap dancing clubs throughout the UK including, Christan Slater, Robbie Williams, Colin Farrell and Sting (cf., Kiss and tell:Robbie's so mean, 2004; Callan, Simpson, and Hedley, 2004a, 2004b). In addition, a couple of stories highlight how well-known artists and television actresses formerly worked as exotic dancers (cf., Marmion, 2004). Other accounts refer to television shows (e.g., soap operas) with exotic dancing scenes and television specials dedicated to the topic (cf., It's

not quite children's TV, 2004; Reid, 2004). Some of these accounts do link exotic dancing with other forms of sex work or infidelity, thereby positioning it as bad sex. At the same time, however, in drawing attention to celebrities seeking it as a source of entertainment or demonstrating how former dancers make it rich, exotic dancing is granted 'star status'. Coupled with this, there are also numerous accounts of celebrities enrolling in pole dancing courses. For example, Kate Moss, Jennifer Aniston, Kelly Brook, Madonna, Demi Moore and Carmen Electra pole dance for fitness and fun (cf., Pole dancing workshops return, 2004; Singh and Graham, 2004). As a result, there is a sense of glamour and even legitimacy associated with exotic dancing. The celebrity status attributed to dancing and the rise in pole dancing interest also normalizes exotic dancing and positions it as an accepted part of changing times. Consequently, there is no reason for people to be shocked by the presence of exotic dancing. It forms part of our culture. It is a culture bombarded by sexuality, on the one hand, and a culture that demands sexuality, on the other hand. Overall, the celebrity status emerging through the discourse of art and entertainment exemplifies the 'coolness' of exotic dancing.

Attention is also drawn to expression and application of human creative skill, imagination and physical agility, strength and conditioning. As a result, exotic dancing is aligned with other skill-based professions and activities that require training and discipline. Interest in exotic dancing as a form of fitness and endurance extends beyond celebrities, to women of all sizes and ages (cf., Pole dancing, 2004; Etherington, 2004). Many instructors are noted as having worked as exotic dancers in the past. Narratives emphasise how personal trainers, fitness instructors and teachers

teach the 'art' of dancing (cf., Batters, 2004). Exotic dancing is likened to "learning an art" (Culley, 2004:27), an art that requires new skills. Pole dancing classes have moved from exotic dancing clubs into fitness centres (e.g., Fitness First in Burton-on-Trent and Coventry), as well as into colleges (cf., McDougall, 2004). In December, New College, a college located in Swindon, started offering a four-week course on pole dancing for interested students (cf., Pole dancing is on the syllabus, 2004; School of pole-dancing, 2004). The move into fitness centres aligns exotic dancing with other fitness classes like pilates and aerobics that develop physical fitness, as well as requiring particular skills. Pole tricks are likened to the skill and agility that gymnastics' require (Bass, 2004). The move into colleges grants exotic dancing the esteem and legitimacy associated with other trades-based diploma programs including aesthetics, welding, information technology and teacher training. In doing this, it grants those teaching and learning the skills with the same sense of professionalism attributed to athletes, tradespersons and artists.

The discourse of art and entertainment can also be seen through references made to the leisure aspects of exotic dancing. These accounts focus upon the carefree, relaxing and enjoyment aspects of exotic dancing. As entertainment, exotic dancing is viewed as a source of amusement, pleasure and fun for clients, as well as for those working in the industry. Clubs are generally licensed under a Public Entertainment License, rather than under the sex trade. To defuse the serious cries of immorality and criminality the entertainment aspect is emphasized. In an attempt to generate support for a license application for a club called *Privilege*, located in Glasgow, owners argue exotic dancing is an institutionalized aspect of the entertainment

world that is integral to the culture of most European cities (Simpson, 2004). Exotic dancing is seen to be harmless fun by both clients and dancers. There is also a temporality and youthfulness associated with the discourse of art and entertainment. For example, a dancer in London who is dancing while completing her university studies notes, “Stripping is a laugh, it keeps me amused and it makes me money...it’s as simple as that” (Edmonstone, 2004:3).

Many clubs defend the industry and their position in it through highlighting the stylish, elegant and exclusive nature of organizations. Challenging the discourse of deviance and immorality, dancers are often described as tall, thin and beautiful. Clubs exert an effort to manage their image through the physicality of the clubs, strict house rules and select clientele. For example, the interior of *FYEO* is described as “cultivated intimacy” with plush red velvet sofas and dimmed lighting (Neil, 2004:26). The uniqueness of *Goodfellas*, a club in Sheffield, is authenticated by the sex of its owner, a woman (Club boss laps up changing times, 2004). Most narratives refer to ownership by males, however, *Goodfellas* allows its female owner to bring her own “distinctive touch” to the club (Club boss laps up changing times, 2004:1). Her intent is to introduce a little sophistication and French style to the club through its crushed velvet surroundings, attractive dancers and smartly dressed men. Another club, *Wildcats*, a chain of clubs launched in Leeds, is aimed at “a youthful and fashion conscious market” (Matthew is a bit of a Wildcat, 2004:1). Clubs also draw attention to the strict adherence to ‘no touching’ rules and the extent of nudity at the clubs (e.g., topless only). Some clubs have membership rules so that only members are permitted onto the facilities. Corporate clients are highlighted as a target market for some

of the clubs in an attempt to demonstrate the ideal type of client, that is, hard working, well dressed and deserving respect. By association, the clubs that attract these types of clients should also be viewed as legitimate businesses and, in turn, respected. One article, details *Spearmint Rhino*'s attempts to clean up its reputation. *Spearmint Rhino* hired a former Scotland detective, Graham Melvin, to review the operations of the clubs. Melvin is quoted as saying, "I think you will find it is a very well-run operation, one of the finest-run in the West End" (*Spearmint Rhino Hires Ex-Detective to Clean up Club's Act*, 2004:19). He notes how dancers' IDs are checked before employment, no touching and no drugs rules are strictly enforced and mystery shoppers are used to ensure the club is adhering to the terms of its license. Melvin's former employment positions him as a man of integrity and honour who is committed to public safety and order. As a result, if he concludes the club is law-abiding and exclusive, then surely it must be. Overall, exotic dancing is positioned as classy with an element of sophistication and the demand for exotic dancing as a form of entertainment for corporate clients emerges. In fact, *Spearmint Rhino* attributes most of its success to business clientele who seek these services as a form of corporate entertainment (Armitage and Prynne, 2004; Walsh, 2004). Other clubs also include it as a form of entertainment for those who enjoy major sporting and cultural events (Simpson, 2004).

Not all of the accounts, however, portray exotic dancing as an acceptable form of entertainment. In Glasgow, the City Council has embarked upon an expensive campaign to explore the activities of exotic dancing clubs. The intent is to provide insight into the entertainment versus sex trade aspects of the work (Wilson, 2004). Many licensing officials in the city feel the clubs

should be licensed under the sex trade, not entertainment. If successful, clubs' efforts to construct organizational identities centred upon art and entertainment may unravel.

5.1.5. Discourse of Growth

The size, shape and nature of the exotic dancing industry often emerge from the narratives over the one-year period. The growth of exotic dancing is, on the one hand, portrayed as having a positive impact upon tourism and consumer spending. On the other hand, growth implies that bigger may not necessarily be better, as expansion means taking over communities, changing the values and norms of society and threatening safety (as discussed under the discourse of public (dis)order).

The expansion plans of clubs, acquisitions of existing clubs and club closures are frequently discussed. Many narratives refer to the licensing processes, requests and rejections of clubs across the UK. Some accounts highlight the opportunities that growth in exotic dancing and other forms of sex work provide to various constituents through increased employment and tourism in affected locations. For example, a report of the club, *Purple Door*, opening in Hull in July, "follows a £500,000 refurbishment of the premises and will create about 20 jobs, plus work for 50 dancers" ('Raunchy club opens doors', 2004:7). Similarly, narratives about the *Ladhar Group* opening its second club in Newcastle highlight that the owners have already created around 50 jobs in the area (Picken, 2004:14).

References are made to more than forty different geographic locations across the UK affected in some way by the exotic dancing industry during 2004. In addition, forty different clubs are also identified. The list of locations and clubs mentioned can be found in Appendix III. Details of target markets and associated demand also emerge (e.g., corporate clients, sports' groups). Furthermore, trends in the industry like the rise in burlesque, as noted in three articles, may become a substitute or competitor for exotic dancing clubs in the future (cf., Etherington, 2004; Hall, 2004). The increasing popularity of pole dancing courses also highlights the changing nature of the industry to include fitness centres and colleges as outlets, as well as the changing demographics of clients in this area of growth (e.g., females / celebrities enrolling in courses).

Overall, the discourse of growth illuminates the increasing significance of the industry upon several aspects of the social and economic structure of the UK system, including, consumer spending, social services (e.g., policing, local authorities), employment rates and conditions of work, and new service opportunities (e.g., education courses, burlesque, fitness classes).

5.1.6. Discourse of Surveillance

The discourse of growth illuminates the expanding nature of the exotic dancing industry. The negative side of this expansion aligns with the discourses of public (dis)order, criminality, and deviance and immorality. The discourse of surveillance constitutes the need for close observation over the exotic dancing industry in order to minimize public (dis)order, limit criminality, and control growth. The underlying tone of this discourse as

emerging from the newspaper narratives is that if the industry is not closely monitored, the regulation of society will be lost and chaos will result. In other words, the industry may be growing, but at what cost, and who pays?

Control and supervision of activities are achieved through rules or attempts to create rules in governing the industry, clubs and its workers. Most narratives make some reference to licensing issues. Several accounts are specific to legislation regulating clubs' activities. There is virtually no legislation in place governing the clubs and decisions are made at a municipal level. As a result, there is great diversity in the conditions under which licenses are granted, modified, renewed and revoked. Several narratives detail requests for increased legislation, in particular in Glasgow, who, as noted previously, has a strong advocate group that would like to see exotic dancing licensed as part of the sex trade (cf., *I fear for decent girls but can't blame them*, 2004; Wilson, 2004). Other articles draw attention to the cost and details of the study commissioned by Glasgow City Council for an academic researcher, Judy Bindel, to explore the activities of the industry (Wilson, 2004). Furthermore, in January, Amber Valley Borough Council located in Ripley, presented a draft policy on lap dancing establishments to the public (*Lap dancing policy launched*, 2004). This was produced in response to the request of an applicant who was unsuccessful in his attempt to obtain a license for a club in the area. Other references are made to specific conditions under which clubs are granted licenses. These conditions include restriction on hours of operations, restrictions limiting exotic dancing to specific events and the installation of CCTV camera surveillance on club premises (cf., *Exotic dancers on the agenda*, 2004; Bevan, 2004). There is a strong sense that the industry is being watched closely and the

present licensing system through Public Entertainment Licenses is a source of concern for many. The regulation governing the industry varies and this is also a concern. Clubs need to be controlled and should feel that their activities are being monitored.

The employment of underage and illegal immigrants as discussed under the discourse of criminality is also linked to the discourse of surveillance. The risk of criminality reinforces the need for constant surveillance of activities in the industry. The lack of employee protection warranted through the self-employed nature of the job where dancers pay commission to clubs each night, as well as the unsafe working conditions are also highlighted as other important concerns (cf., Mackay, 2004). The exploitation of women is commonly used as a source of contention for many constituents. This includes both the objectification of women, as well as the underpaid, unsafe and coercive nature of the work (cf., Dickson, 2004; Mackay, 2004; Oliver, 2004). In three pieces attention is drawn to the unionization of exotic dancing (Table-dancing club expands to target corporate market, 2004; Gall, 2004; Mackay, 2004). In 2004, the GMB, Britain's largest union, created a division for sex workers. The Table Dancers' Union (TDU) organized dancers from two clubs, one in Bristol, as well as London in 2004 and signed agreements with club owners. Two narratives present sharp responses to Glasgow's attempts to rid the city of exotic dancing clubs. Union supporters note the focus should be upon improving the working conditions for these workers, rather than intensifying the stigma attached to the work.

Lisa Maggs, who heads the TDU, said...simply attacking the clubs, rather than having a list of regulations for club owners to abide by, councillors and feminist groups were stopping clubs improving and losing their sleazy image...if they want to bellyache and scream about moral issues, then they should try to change the industry for the better, not try to wipe it out (MacKay, 2004:8).

Interestingly, presented as opposing positions, unionization and stricter licensing requirements both result in more surveillance to regulate the activities of the industry.

5.1.7. Dominant and Reverse Discourses

The six discourses as discussed in this chapter emerged through an iterative process of analysis of the newspaper narratives. In many ways, the discourses are interconnected and mutually constitutive. Some discourses support each other, thereby making their messages more persuasive. Other discourses challenge the dominant discourses, thereby offering space for alternative or “reverse” (Weedon, 1987:106) forms of reasoning. Over time, these reverse discourses may minimize the pervasiveness of the dominant discourses, or the reverse discourses may continue to be marginalized by the messages of dominant discourses.

Discourses of public (dis)order, criminality, deviance and immorality, and surveillance, are very clearly connected. These discourses reconstruct dualist notions of good sex versus bad sex. Exotic dancing represents bad sex, that is, unsafe, dangerous, dirty, sinful, commercial, public, and outside of marriage (or long-term relationships). By association, establishments offering these services and individuals working in the industry become

marginalized and stigmatized, relative to good sex (e.g., between two consenting adults, private, safe, pure). While the methods and discourses identified here differ from the work of Rubin (1993), Brewis and Linstead (2000), and Hollway (1991), the dualism of good sex versus bad sex, also resonates in their work. Sex work, in general, exists in the marginalized position of the other in the dualism. The divide between what constitutes good sex and bad sex, as they note, is constantly shifting. The discourse of surveillance, draws upon the notions that exotic dancing is a threat to public safety and community image (discourse of public (dis)order), it is immoral and abnormal (discourse of deviance and immorality) and it is unlawful and dangerous (discourse of criminality), to create an urgency that exotic dancing needs to be controlled, regulated, monitored and even eradicated. The relationships between these discourses do not necessarily occur in a linear or unidirectional manner. From a one-year archival study, it is impossible, and somewhat irrelevant to this study, to determine if the discourses of public (dis)order, criminality, and deviance and immorality are more historical and / or embedded than the discourse of surveillance. However, the historical development of particular discourses (e.g., surveillance may emerge in response to the growth of the industry) may explain how the persuasiveness of one discourse is enhanced by the ideas of supporting discourses.

The discourse of art and entertainment mostly stands in contrast to the bad sex discourses noted above. Although I use ‘discourse’ differently than Weedon (1987), her description of “reverse discourse” (p. 106) to refer to opportunities for reversal and resistance to dominant discourses (and subject positions defined by dominant discourses), is helpful in exploring the space

for the discourse of art and entertainment among the more dominant bad sex discourses. She notes, “while a discourse will offer a preferred form of subjectivity, its very organization will imply other subject positions and the possibility of reversal” (p.106). Exotic dancing as an established form of skilled art, an accepted form of entertainment or trendy pastime as emerging through the discourse of art and entertainment was popular in the newspaper narratives. This discourse challenges the position of exotic dancing as bad sex and may over time serve to shift the position of exotic dancing towards the good sex side of the good sex / bad sex dualism. The messages of the bad sex discourses, however, had a greater presence in the narratives. As Weedon (1987) argues not all discourses come from a secure institutional location and this limits the social power and authority of those discourses. In this case, the discourses of criminality, deviance and immorality, and public (dis)order may be more powerful in positioning exotic dancing in particular ways. At the same time, however, “in order to have a social effect, a discourse must at least be in circulation” (Weedon:1987:197). As such, the discourse of art and entertainment offers alternative subject positions from which individuals may embrace and enact.

The discourse of growth is also connected to both the bad sex discourses, as well as the discourse of art and entertainment. It sits more neutrally on the issue of exotic dancing as bad or good, and mostly emphasises the economics of the industry and emerging industry segments (e.g., burlesque, pole dancing classes). At the same time, however, issues around licensing (e.g., under what conditions granted, number of establishments), as well as public order (e.g., location of clubs, monitoring of activities) support the idea that exotic dancing is getting bigger and more significant. In this way,

the discourse of growth, art and entertainment, criminality, public (dis)order, deviance and immorality, and surveillance draw upon each other in the construction of how exotic dancing is positioned.

5.2. *For Your Eyes Only*

FYEO is one of the first tableside dancing clubs in the UK with its first club opening in 1995. Presently, seven *FYEO* clubs operate in the UK including, Newcastle, Bournemouth, Croydon, Park Royal (London), Mayfair (London), Bradford and Southampton. The *SFI Group* held ownership of all clubs, except Bradford, until 2003. In 2003, the *Ladhar Group*, a leisure and property group based in Wallsend, purchased four of the clubs (Newcastle, Bournemouth, Croydon, Park Royal) from *SFI Group* in a multi-million pound deal. The Bradford venue is also owned by the *Ladhar Group* and was opened after the purchase of the four clubs from *SFI Group*. The *Ladhar Group* is presently negotiating the purchase of the Southampton venue as well. Although the Mayfair location is not owned by the *Ladhar Group* the main *FYEO* website hosts the Newcastle, Bournemouth, Park Royal and Mayfair club details.

The *Ladhar Group* is a family-owned business started by brothers Baldev (Dave) and Amarjit Ladhar more than 20 years ago. The company has seven different divisions ranging from nursing homes to pubs. The tableside dancing industry is seen to be a high growth area for the company with revenue estimates in excess of £6.5 million annually (Walker, 2005). In addition to the new *FYEO* opened in Bradford, the company has also opened another tableside dancing club, *Blue Velvet*, in Newcastle. The

company plans to expand to 10 clubs by the end of 2005 with new clubs in Glasgow, Liverpool and Manchester. If these targets are met the company will become the UK's biggest operator of tableside dancing (Walker, 2005). Glenn Nicie, Operations Manager, deals with most of the *FYEO* operational decisions. Glenn held a similar position for *FYEO* when the clubs were owned by *SFI Group*. Glenn has been with *FYEO* in some capacity almost since the beginning. The company has recently appointed a Commercial Director, Martin Calder, to take responsibility for the growth strategy across the company's portfolio of businesses.

5.2.1. A Peek Inside the Clubs

One would have to know where they were going and what they were looking for to find *FYEO* in Newcastle. It is located at the end of a street in a detached building. The closest building houses a large car park. At night, during club hours, no movement can be seen from any of the other buildings on the street. There are few streetlights, although the nearest main street is about 100 yards away where a large fire hall sits and most bus routes run. On the corner of the next street the local police station sits with several police cars parked outside most nights. The outside of the club is very unassuming and minimal signage is displayed. Doors open at 9:00 p.m., however, a well-dressed doorman (and it is a man) waits behind a locked door from about 8:30 onwards.

Upon entering you pay an entrance fee of £5 Monday to Thursday until 11 p.m. and £10 after 11 p.m. and £10 on Fridays and Saturdays. If you are on the guest list there is no door charge. There are two bars in the club (a

virtual tour of the club can be found at (http://www.fyeo.co.uk/clubs/tours/ncastel_tour.html). Downstairs there is a brightly lit area with a big screen television where dancing does not occur, at least not on my visits. To get upstairs you will either be escorted directly upstairs from the front door or through the downstairs bar to another set of stairs that lead to the upstairs bar. The ushers are men, also well-dressed in suits, and they will bring you directly to your chair.

Upstairs the scene is very different. The area is dimly light with only a few lights at the bar and around the stage area. A look around the room reveals mostly men, some on their own and others in groups. Most nights there is at least one female customer in the club. Sometimes these 'female' customers are with other male customers and other times with a group of females. There is main centre area with plush, oval chairs surrounding small tables to hold drinks. This area is directly in front of, and surrounds, the stage. If seats are available, and one chooses, you can sit right next to the stage for the evening. There are three slightly elevated and somewhat partitioned off areas. There is one large area to the right with more plush chairs and tables and two smaller areas, one with a clear view of the stage and another at the back of the room. These two smaller areas also have some plush chairs and leather seating areas stretch along the walls. You stay seated unless you wish to visit the washroom, approach a specific dancer (although this is unusual as they usually come to you) or are escorted off to one of the side areas by a dancer for a dance.

During the weeknights there are plenty of seats to choose from and the atmosphere is very laid back and relaxing. Dancers escort clients off to the

side area for dances and lead them back to their seats when the dance has finished. On a Friday or Saturday night, however, the scene is very different. During busy hours, seats in the main area surrounding the stage are virtually touching and the serenity of the club is lost. Dancers may still take clients off to the side areas if there is room, however, it is more likely that in any direction you turn dancers will be performing for individuals or groups at tables surrounding you. The club is noisier and bustling with business.

Dancers are considered self-employed and must pay the club's house fees to dance for every shift they work. The house fees consist of a fixed amount set by the club and a variable amount determined at the end of the night based upon the level of business in the club on the particular shift. The club aims to take approximately one quarter of the dancer's income earned. Dancers' income comes from the number of dances they perform (excluding stage shows), tips, and sit-downs. Dances cost £10 for each song, however, dancers can charge more for some variation of a dance (e.g., a couple requesting a dance might get charged £20). Customers can also buy dancers' time as sit-downs. In a sit-down a dancer devotes her attention solely to the paying client for the agreed amount of time. Customers can use this time for dances or conversation. Time is charged in thirty-minute intervals. A customer can pay for a dancer's time for the entire evening if they choose. Sit-down prices are not fixed by the club and dancers can negotiate or dictate, within reason, their fees. These fees usually run somewhere around £100 for thirty-minute intervals. Income on a shift can range from less than the amount of required house fees on a shift to upwards of £1000 per shift. The level of business at the club influences the earning potential of dancers

on a given night. Coupled with this, there can be great differences in the amount of income earned across dancers due to the popularity and persuasive selling techniques of particular dancers.

Stage shows occur every other song. Dancers dance two songs consecutively and then there is a one-track break before another dancer enters the stage. Stage shows vary from active pole tricks to mostly floor work. By the time the two songs are finished all of the dancer's clothes are removed, except for the thongs that cover her genital area from the front. Between 11p.m. and 12 a.m. a grand stage show occurs. One-by-one dancers are introduced and parade across the stage. Following the grand stage show promotional offers of two-for-one dances are announced for the upcoming two songs. Dances are non-contact and customer's hands are expected to be out of their laps, to the side, or on the arms of the chair. In the main area, dancers do move very close to the customers and incidental contact is likely to occur from time to time. Occasionally, you will see two dancers walking around holding hands offering to dance as a duo to satisfy what I interpreted as the perceived homoerotic fantasies of customers.

The dressing room is behind the stage area, separated from the club with two swinging doors. The manager's office is located between swinging door number one and two. The dressing room itself is an open area with lockers to the side. Mirrors and countertops line the walls and stools sit below the countertops. Usually there is rack of dresses and outfits from a local dressmaker located against one of the walls for dancers to select for purchase. Dancers usually change their outfits throughout the night, some more frequently than others. These 'new faces' offer some variety to attract

and maintain customers' interest. Dancers arrive at work around 8 p.m., an hour before the club opens. They apply make-up, style their hair and dress on work premises. A manager will enter the dressing room shortly before opening time to collect initial house fees (the rest will be collected later in the night). A manager will also re-enter the dressing room several times to encourage and direct dancers to the club floor for 9 p.m. sharp. If dancers are not on the club floor when the club opens they can be fined (usually £10). Dancers can be fined for various other reasons (e.g., rude to customers, causing conflict among dancers). House rules for both clubs are detailed in Appendices IV and V.

In the Mayfair location, the atmosphere is similar in many ways. However, there are some visible differences. A pole on the centre stage connects the first and second floors. There is also a balcony style area on the second floor that looks down upon the main stage and seating areas on the first floor. Topless only dancing takes place on the first floor and fully nude dancing, at double the price of topless only dances, is restricted to the second floor. The two dressing rooms are located on the ground floor and are across the hall from each other. There are no doors on the dressing rooms and the space is minimal in each of the rooms, given the number of dancers using them prior to opening times. The hallway is one that sees frequent use by both managers, as well as other staff. There is little sense of privacy afforded by the design of the rooms.

5.2.2. Controversy in Newcastle

The growth strategy of the *Ladhar Group* has sometimes been dampened by the negative media attention and public outcry against the clubs' operations in certain locations. The Newcastle club in particular has been the site of substantial controversy since the beginning. The community discontentment surrounding the opening of *FYEO* in Newcastle in November 2001 was highly charged. On its opening night, individuals representing various interest groups were present with cameras taking pictures of customers as they entered or left the club (Table dancing club opens to cries of shame, 2001). In May 2002, nearly 900 people officially objected through letters and petitions to the renewal of the club's license (Hastings, 2002). The reactions from various stakeholders, including licensing magistrates, city councillors, members of christian groups, rape crisis centres, students' unions, *FYEO* employees, management and owners, are varied and complex. They range from claims of increasing violence against women, to causing marital problems, to exploiting women in a region historically characterized by low wages, to providing more flexible working arrangements, to empowering women.

Again in the autumn of 2003, *FYEO* was the center of debate when it was granted its license request for an additional *FYEO* in Newcastle, only after an appeal decision. Various groups, including city councillors and other community groups, expressed concerns over another club operating in Newcastle. A city resident was quoted saying, "there is a real danger of Newcastle becoming a city of sleaze, not a city of culture" (Higgerson, 2003:2). Glenn Nicie at the time had hoped the public involvement would

be less controversial than when they opened their first establishment in Newcastle two years prior.

I hope they'll not be any objections this time. Last time we made an application there were a lot of fears but we understood those as we'd faced them and they have proved to be unfounded. We provide a safe, friendly environment. It takes time and attention to get it right. You need the right management, staff, dancers and customers. We are discreet, we do think of the public and the city centre. We liaise with the police and councillors. There is no intention to cause offence to anyone (Cartmell, 2003:1).

Two requests for licenses, one by *FYEO* owners and one by the owners of *Sugar*, a nightclub in Newcastle, were filed in July 2003 and denied in September 2003 by the local city council. *FYEO* heard their appeal in November 2003 and the appeal from *Sugar*, renamed *Privilege*, was heard by licensing magistrates in February 2004. Both licenses were eventually granted, but not without significant public attention.

City councillor, Nigel Todd, who also objected to the first application to *FYEO*, said he felt that it was a "pretty sad kind of man who'd want to go to this kind of thing" (Cartmell, 2003:1). Furthermore, councillor Joyce McCarty objected to the issuance of licenses because the locations were a part of the cultural quarter, as well as the gay quarter of the city.

We have a responsibility to ensure that area remains safe. My concerns were that under-the-influence heterosexuals standing in the same queue as gay people might cause problems. I am morally opposed but you can't object on those grounds (Mcmillan, 2003:1).

Glenn Nicie was keen to emphasize that Northumbria Police had no complaints about the management of the premises, nor had there been any reports of indecency in the area since it opened (Cartmell, 2003; Mcmillan, 2003).

The negative attention continues into 2004 and is likely to persist. When *FYEO* in Newcastle requested a change to its license to open Sundays from noon to 12:30 a.m. and to stay open until 2:00 a.m. on Sundays before bank holidays weekends in 2004, Christian groups and women's rights groups were outraged by the request (Sunday dance plan outrage, 2004). Creating an identity that defuses such harsh criticisms is integral to *FYEO*'s growth strategy.

5.2.3. An Organizational Identity Based Upon Exclusivity and 'High Quality' Service

Classic entertainment for the modern gentlemen...Welcome to FYEO the UK's first and foremost tableside dancing experience. Consider this an invitation to the ultimate adult Disney where a personal dance will only cost you £10.00. We pride ourselves in offering the very best entertainment, first-class service and the most exciting dancers in the world, in venues that are luxurious, relaxing and safe (For Your Eyes Only, 2005).

FYEO goes through great efforts to create a unique position for itself within the exotic dancing industry. Corporate documents and managers refer to the club as a 'gentlemen's club', that is, a club offering high quality service and upscale entertainment in a fantasy-like atmosphere. Gentlemen's clubs occupy a position of exclusivity and present exotic dancing establishments

as professional, legitimate and law-abiding businesses (Forsyth and Deshotels, 1997). As noted in Glenn Nicie's comments above, the club is quick to dismiss cries of criminality, violence, exploitation, and public disorder as constructed through the discourses of criminality, deviance and immorality, public (dis)order, and surveillance. As if in response to the bad sex discourses, *FYEO* constructs a unique identity for itself through formal and informal rules.

Managers and corporate documents emphasise the entertainment aspect of the work and downplay the 'sex work' image of the industry. **Jim**, a *FYEO* manager in London, accepts that not everyone is open to the idea of exotic dancing as a form of entertainment. He highlights, however, the fantasy-like experience that *FYEO* offers. In doing this, he downplays the negative outcomes (e.g., exploitation, family destruction, violence) associated with the industry by critics – if it is 'not real' like a fantasy, then 'real' outcomes as claimed do not materialize. Furthermore, to make his argument more persuasive he defuses the criticisms of immorality and criminality by comparing the activities of *FYEO* to that of other clubs. These other clubs offer services outside of their licenses and move away from fantasy-like entertainment into 'reality'. By comparison, *FYEO* is then positioned more positively and more entertainment-like, rather than as a form of sex work. His comments below illustrate this.

I don't have an issue with it but I've been in the industry since it began and lots of people are offended by it, it's not their thing. As I say, if they don't like it they don't have to come. It shouldn't be thrown down everybody's throats. It's an entertainment that is on the whole accepted by most people... There are so many areas that are being missed. Non-UK citizens coming in as dancers and

or dressing themselves up as dancers and really being prostitutes and escorts. It's bringing something that shouldn't be within this industry. Amm we deal with non-contact fantasies. Bring in touching and all that sort of thing they're reality, that's physical, you can quantify that. Whatever goes through some guy's head while a girl's dancing you can't quantify it. Whatever he's thinking about at that time, three minutes of a dance and that's it. She goes off and it goes back to normality.

Customers are often referred to as 'guests' of *FYEO*. This highlights *FYEO*'s attention to creating an image of 'high quality' hospitality. Rather than viewing customers simply as paying for three-minute dance and moving on, a guest is someone you invite into your home and make comfortable and welcome back again and again. The *Pole and Tableside Dancing School Manual* (For Your Eyes Only, 2004:6) has a section on 'Guests' that discusses how customers should be viewed.

Guests are...

1. More than just customers who purchases dances and leave.
2. People who depend upon you to make them feel comfortable in a HOME AWAY FROM HOME.
3. People who bring their special needs, wants and expectations to your property.
4. The reason for the hospitality business.

In order to create an image of exclusivity and 'high quality' service, *FYEO* expects staff, that is, management and dancers, to behave in certain ways. Some of these rules are explicit and formalized in the house rules of the clubs, while others are more implicit and emerge through informal interaction and unwritten rules.

Derek, a *FYEO* manager in London, details how managers are expected to follow particular codes of conduct. These rules are not formalized by *FYEO*,

however, they emerge through informal communication among management. In his comments below, **Derek** draws attention to how important it is for managers to enact a sense of professionalism. This was particularly important in relationships with dancers. Relations with dancers should be 'business only', with no crossing lines between work and pleasure.

There's a thin line between keeping it professional and you know once you cross that line. Common sense will tell you that in a day, amm if you're going to deal with the girls on a level other than professional it's going to give yourself a hard time. It makes working more difficult you know. You have to be very sure that it's something you can deal with number one. And as a company it is discouraged - relationships between girls and management. It can also lead to other abuses of your position you know. Girls need a certain amount of time or whatever to get ready. Just because you're dating someone then obviously you want to cut them some slack. So for that reason it is frowned upon by the company. We try to avoid that as much as possible. Keeping it professional is just paramount, you have to.

Terry, a manager in Newcastle, also refers to the need for management to be professional. He uses the example of the housemother in Newcastle. Housemothers are expected to serve as a link between managers and dancers. In Newcastle the housemother position was not filled when the previous individual left the organization. According to **Terry**, she had been unable to maintain a divide between her responsibilities as management and as a friend to the dancers. "It was almost like a them versus us, like she sort of stick up for them in certain circumstances and amm she let sort of friendships and the like get in the way of her professional conduct". Professionalism for both **Derek** and **Terry** entails successfully maintaining a divide between private relations and public responsibilities. The former

entails emotion and intimacy and the latter involves rationality and objectivity. In this way, *FYEO* is constructed as a legitimate organization, no different than any other organization offering entertainment services. Furthermore, the more professional its staff, the higher the quality of service it provides.

Dancers are also expected to engage in ‘professional’ behaviour. **Derek** indicates there are similar expectations of professional behaviour at work for dancers, even when dancers do not like each other. He notes management acknowledges that not all co-workers will like each other, but “we don’t allow any kind of conflict on the floor between the girls. So yah I mean it’s balance...competition [*between dancers is not*] to the point where it’s disruption”. Again, *FYEO* tries to regulate the type of emotion that employees express while at work to ensure the delivery of a high quality service.

FYEO’s house rules prescribe various rules to govern the behaviour of dancers to ensure consistency in the service it provides. For example, the clubs enforces rules on appropriate drinking behaviour. Drinking in excess is vaguely defined as “alcohol influencing your dancing or attitude whilst in the club” (House Rule 7 Mayfair *FYEO* – See Appendix V). Dancers are disciplined if they engage in such behaviour (e.g., removed from the floor, fined, suspended, fired). Such behaviour is seen to negatively affect the upscale entertainment image the club tries to create. Interestingly, however, another house rule indicates that if, and when, customers offer to buy dancers drinks, “orders of cocktails, shooters and bottles of champagne would be highly appreciated by your waiting staff”. Here the contradiction

in some of the formalized rules emerges. On the one hand, the rules indicate how important it is for dancers to monitor their consumption of alcohol, and on the other hand, they are encouraged to accept drinks from customers to increase the sales of the club and commissions of waiting staff. **Terry** also notes that drinking is often apart of the socializing aspect of the job. This may indeed serve to create confusion for management and dancers in determining what exactly appropriate drinking entails on the job. If dancers do not want to drink, the club has created a way for dancers to accept offers from clients (and thus not risk upsetting clients by refusing offers of free drinks) by indicating that “a cocktail “with a straw” means you would like it made without alcohol” (House Rule 7a Mayfair *FYEO*).

Dancers are also not permitted to bring partners to the clubs while working. House Rule 8 indicates, “no partners, boyfriends, girlfriends or husbands are allowed in the club. If you have a friend that would like to come in, please check with the management first” (House Rules Mayfair *FYEO*). **Terry** notes how *FYEO* in Newcastle tried to enforce a ‘no dating clients’ rule, however, given the small size of the city it was difficult to enforce and monitor outside work boundaries. *FYEO* does, however, attempt to limit what they see as potential confrontational situations (e.g., boyfriends visiting the club while their partner was working) that might upset the serene and ‘ordered’ atmosphere of the club.

The physical appearance of dancers also plays a role in supporting *FYEO*’s organizational identity. Selection decisions are influenced by how an individual performs in her audition, as well as how she is dressed, her hair,

her make-up and so on. **Derek** highlights this in his comments about the company's selection process.

I mean a lot of it has to do with stage presence. Just the way they present themselves and you know how they look, hair, nails, costumes. Obviously how they react, interact with the audience and their skills on the stage, and how well they can dance, you know. Obviously their looks are very important.

The house rules reinforce the importance of physical appearance in creating the 'right' atmosphere. Dancers are expected to wear designer-made dresses, cover any tattoos they might have and even consult with management on appropriate hairstyles.

All dancers are required to wear elegant evening wear to come below the knee, cat suits, two pieces and high heels (if open, toe nails must be manicured) until 12 am, after that any costume / dress please check with management. Hair and makeup to be of required standard. If you want to change your hair drastically, consult the management (House Rule 6 Mayfair *FYEO*, See Appendix V).

The house rules at Mayfair are also very explicit about appropriate behaviour when dancing for a 'guest' to ensure the line between fantasy-like experiences and reality, as noted by **Jim** above, does not get crossed. Dancers are expected to be "erotic not explicit" (House Rule 16 under Dancing:Topless and Fully Nude, Mayfair *FYEO*), not spread their legs while dancing (House Rule 1 under Dancing:Topless and Fully Nude, Mayfair *FYEO*), and not place their head into or near a customer's lap (House Rule 8 under Dancing:Topless and Fully Nude, Mayfair *FYEO*). The formalization of appropriate behaviour in this way to create an image of exclusivity and high quality service, establishes a situation whereby what

many would consider acts of ‘commercial sexuality’ become scripted, mundane acts of everyday organizational life. For example, House Rule 3 (Under Dancing:Topless and Fully Nude, Mayfair *FYEO*) states, “do not lick your nipples or anybody’s else’s”, while House Rule 12 (Under Dancing:Topless and Fully Nude, Mayfair *FYEO*) states, “underwear must be fully removed, not just around the knees or ankles while performing fully nude”. The *Pole and Tableside Dancing School Manual* (For Your Eyes Only, 2004:13) states that appropriate rules of engagement include, “cross your legs like a lady always should”. Furthermore, the construction of the line between acceptable (i.e., not licking nipples) and unacceptable (e.g., not fully removing underwear) fantasy-like experiences and what it is to be a ‘lady’ in this context appears to be arbitrarily established, and even somewhat absurd. In many ways, exotic dancing as a ‘sexual’ act becomes a parody of sorts regulated by the company.

In a similar way, *FYEO* creates expectations about particular feeling rules required for job performance. This influences dancers’ need to engage in impression management in order to meet organizational objectives. In the *Pole and Tableside Dancing School Manual* guidelines of engagement for dancers are described (For Your Eyes Only, 2004). The guidelines emphasise the importance of a positive attitude, smiling, not engaging in particular types of conversations (e.g., religion, politics) or feelings (e.g., sarcasm, humour) and docility. Adherence to these feeling rules or expected behaviours is equated with professionalism and ‘high quality’ service. *FYEO* also draws directly upon other types of public and private activities to illuminate the professionalism of such behaviours (e.g., car merchandising, politics).

Smiling is OK. The most powerful expression available is the old faithful: the sincere smile. It's an expression that works wonders everywhere on earth. The sincere smile has helped to sell used cars, launch love affairs, win political office, soothe hurt feelings, and spread warmth and good cheer. Guests love it when you smile. They often ask entertainers who aren't smiling to do so. They never ask smiling entertainers to stop (*Pole and Tableside Dancing Manual*, For Your Eyes Only, 2004:10).

At the same, however, this notion of professionalism and 'high quality' service is also linked to particular notions of femininity and even heterosexuality. Dancers are discouraged from engaging in what might be perceived as sensitive topics, argue with customers, or correct customers. Listening is presented as a key element in successful engagement. Dancers are expected to be attentive and understand clients' needs without being assertive. *FYEO* uses these rules to construct an image of exclusivity and 'high quality' service for various constituents, including, management, dancers, customers, competitors and the public at large. These exaggerated expressions of femininity (e.g., passivity, compassion) also become techniques through which *FYEO* constructs gender scripts required for this work. Coupled with this, while *FYEO* does indicate that the clubs are a source of entertainment for both male and females, most formal and informal references create the image of a polite, passive, but somewhat sexually assertive, attractive, financially dependent female performing for the macho, knight in shining armour, decisive male. The uniform, heterosexual fantasy is so sharp and vivid in this context that it becomes hyperreal (Baudrillard, 1994). The taken-for-granted assumption that this is what a heterosexual fantasy 'looks like' becomes almost comical.

5.3. Discourses, Organizational Identity and Retrospective Identity Construction

The activities of the club to construct a particular image and the discourses surfacing through the newspaper archival analysis are mutually constitutive processes. In contributing to the creation of, or drawing upon, the discourse of art and entertainment, *FYEO* emphasises the novelty of the service it provides, shifting cultural times and the professionalism of the club and dancers. At the same time, the club attempts to defuse the messages of the dominant bad sex discourses by informally regulating the behaviour of managers (and dancers), as well as formally defining strict rules of behaviour for dancers. In order to separate itself from other clubs in the exotic dancing industry, as well as other forms of sex work, *FYEO* shifts attention to the less safe, less clean, more dangerous, and even criminal aspects of other clubs or other forms of sex work. In this way, *FYEO* constructs a more positive position for itself by constructing an inferior 'other' (e.g., dirty clubs, prostitution). In comparison to the inferior 'other', *FYEO* has a more positive organizational identity. The discourses as constructed through the newspapers and the efforts of the clubs may also intersect with dancers' perceptions of the industry and the clubs constructed even before dancers begin working in the industry. In this way, a priori socialization experiences of dancers are likely to play a role in dancers' sense making efforts in constructing their work-based identities.

Given the service-based nature of the work, *FYEO*'s ability to successfully construct this image of exclusivity and 'high quality' service, as well as counteract the messages of the dominant bad sex discourses is very much

dependent upon the dancers that work in the club. In the next chapter, I represent the stories of dancers that work in *FYEO* to explore how these dancers make sense of their work-based identity. In my efforts to make sense of how these dancers retrospectively construct their identities, the discourses discussed in this chapter and *FYEO*'s attempts to construct a particular organizational identity offer an interesting backdrop to illuminate how macro forces, both organizational and beyond, *might* play a role in the processes of work-based identity for the subjective individual. The interplay between dominant and reverse discourses also highlights how the clubs, as well as individuals may have to sort through, filter and 'manage' multiple and even contradictory messages in constructing identities. In this way, identity work begins to emerge as a complex and messy process.

5.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter has offered a particular version of how the exotic dancing industry, exotic dancing organizations and exotic dancing employees are positioned in the broader macro environment. Through an analysis of newspaper narratives over a one-year period several discourses emerged, namely, a discourse of public (dis)order, a discourse of criminality, a discourse of deviance and immorality, a discourse of surveillance, a discourse of art and entertainment, and a discourse of growth. Some of these discourses resonate a message of good sex versus bad sex, with exotic dancing aligned on the bad sex side of the dualism. Indeed, the divide between good sex and bad sex may be temporal as noted by Rubin (1991) and thus there may be room for clubs or dancers to negotiate a position on the good sex side over time. The discourse of art and entertainment was

presented as a reverse discourse that may not have the same social power and authority that comes from a secure institutional location like the bad sex discourses. At the same time, however, it offers new subject positions that challenge the dominant subject positions constituted by the bad sex discourses. The discourse of growth is not dependent upon the good sex / bad sex divide. It emphasises the increasing significance of exotic dancing to the economics of our society. These discourses provide a context from which to make sense of organizational actions and identity, as well as individual identity construction.

This chapter also provided a detailed description of the activities of *FYEO*, as well as how *FYEO* attempts to construct an organizational identity based upon exclusivity and 'high quality' service. The relationships between the discourses discussed and *FYEO*'s efforts are seen to be mutually constitutive and provide a grounding for beginning to understand the context in which dancers retrospectively construct their work-based identities. In the next chapter, I draw upon the stories of dancers and managers, as well as the archival material discussed in this chapter to make sense of the processes in which dancers' engage in constructing their work-based identities.

Chapter Six

Processes of Identity Construction

6. Introduction

In this research, identity construction is viewed as a retrospective, fluid, meaning making process whereby dancers construct, confront and reflect upon their who they think they, and others are. Identity construction is an ongoing process whereby an individual struggles to balance the desire for coherence in knowing herself and making sense of the tensions and contradictions that arise throughout this process (Thomas and Davies, 2005). This chapter draws primarily upon the stories of dancers in exploring how the subjective individual constructs her work-based identities. In representing these stories I focus upon the *how* of identity work and the *subjective experience* of identity work. The former emphasizes the processual nature of identity construction and the latter emphasizes the lived experiences of the dancers and of myself in this process. In making sense of these stories of identity construction I also draw upon the stories of managers working at *FYEO*, as well as the organizational rules and discourses discussed in Chapter Five. For example, the stories of managers are drawn upon from time to time to complement or contradict the stories re-presented by dancers. Moreover, the relationships among organizational rules, discourses and dancers' engagement with them are seen to be mutually constitutive in identity construction. As a result, the stories in this chapter are a combination of the dancers' and managers' stories as heard (or read), corporate documents and newspaper archives, as well as my voice re-presenting this material. The stories are re-presented as processes of identity

construction to capture the fluid, complex and ambiguous nature of identity construction. It is through these processes that an individual constructs, challenges, negotiates and comes to understand who they and others think they are. The processes that emerge through my analysis, include, Constructing Psychological Barriers, Performance, Balancing Freedom and Oppression, and Emphasizing Temporality. In this chapter each of these processes will be discussed. In the next chapter, the identity roles constructed through these processes will be discussed to facilitate the theorizing of identity at work that follows in that chapter.

6.1. Constructing Psychological Barriers

Some dancers construct psychological barriers to separate themselves from colleagues, other sex workers and the industry in general. In constructing these barriers they align themselves on the side of the barrier they, or others, view more favourable. This also allows them to minimize the stigma associated with the work they perform and their sense of self. In some cases it also allows them to segregate their spoiled identities (Goffman, 1963) to certain parts of their lives, while protecting more favourable identities in other areas of their lives (e.g., relations with parents). The processes interpreted as efforts to construct psychological barriers, include, Acceptable Levels of Nudity, Alcohol and Work, and Distancing. These barriers are somewhat ambiguously defined, vary from dancer to dancer, change over time and are in part shaped by the organization.

6.1.1. Acceptable Levels of Nudity

Dancers use the extent of nudity that they, or others, deem acceptable as a means through which to construct separate private and public selves. For some, underwear serves as a psychological barrier that allows them to separate 'not sex' or 'not intimate' exposure of their body for work purposes, as defined by topless only, from sex or intimacy which entails full nudity and is reserved for private relationships outside of work.

Carrie is a twenty-year old dancer who has been working as an exotic dancer for the past year. **Carrie** presently works at *FYEO* in Newcastle and she hopes to stay in the industry for at least another three years. She has also worked as a dancer in other establishments in the UK, as well as in France. She describes how she initially did not disclose the details of her job to her partner. When he did discover she was an exotic dancer this became a source of conflict in their relationship. In managing this conflict she confirms her sense of commitment and fidelity to her relationship through emphasizing that the dancing is topless only and therefore does not threaten the stability of her relationship or invade her private life. The creation of these barriers allows her to manage the uncertainty involved in creating coherent identities as exotic dancer, as well as manage the stigma enacted by others playing an influencing role.

Well I've had the same boyfriend for more than a year. When I started I actually didn't tell him. I did it all behind his back and after three months someone else told him. He was a bit angry at first and then after like probably about two days he was alright. He just, he always asks me about it and stuff. But he's been here, he's had a look around. He knows it's just ahh topless, he doesn't see anything that badly wrong with it now.

Topless only dancing also serves as a way for dancers to more easily align their work with creative and training-based professions. This creates public - private divides, as well as infuses their jobs with the same positive value attributed to other work recognized as skilled-based, legitimate work.

Frankie, also a dancer in Newcastle, describes herself as a dancer, that is, a skilled dancer with extensive experience in dancing beyond exotic dancing realms. **Frankie** is twenty-two years old and has been working as an exotic dancer at *FYEO* in Newcastle for four months. She has danced topless elsewhere in Europe prior to working at *FYEO*. She sees her time as an exotic dancer as a temporary decision to help pay off some bills. For her, dancing is positioned as a job requiring real physical competencies and skills in performing. She also notes how topless only, at least at *FYEO*, is fun but not sexual. By default, anything falling outside the realm of topless only could indeed be considered sexual and cross the boundaries between that which is sexual and private and that which is public.

I've been a dancer, well I've danced all my life. All types of dancing I can do. [*I've been*] just a few months here. But I've danced well abroad yah, but not in lap dancing clubs though, no, only table dancing clubs. Stripping is more like showing and [*topless*] is more for fun, and music and being sensual with the customer and stuff. That's it, nothing sexual though, not in here anyway.

Despite creating these boundaries between topless only equals 'not sexual' equals public and nudity equals 'sexual' equals private, earlier in the interview when **Frankie** describes her motivations for dancing the private - public divide was not as clear. At that point she notes that her job is exciting and she can perform stage shows and that the work "excites even your sex life". **Frankie** tries to maintain a divide between public and private life by indicating that what goes on at work may not be sexual for her. Her quote, however, implies that the feelings and experiences enacted through her job transfer into her private life. As a result, the boundaries she constructs in her retrospective identity work are not as fixed as her above quote implies.

The extent of nudity is also used as a criterion for determining the image of the club and its position in the industry. In Newcastle, some dancers emphasize the topless only rule as an indicator of the upscale nature of the job and the club. It is also associated with other positive job characteristics.

Lesley is twenty-three years old and has been dancing for the past six years. She started in the industry as a "stripper" and has worked with various agencies and establishments in England. She presently works at *FYEO* in Newcastle. She has worked as both a fully nude and topless only dancer, but describes topless only dancing as "more money... [*and*] more classy because you don't take your bottoms off". In a similar way, the extent of nudity permitted in the clubs also reflects dancers' perceptions clients who frequent the clubs and dancers who work at them.

Sam is a twenty-five year old who has been dancing at *FYEO* venues, topless only, for the past two and a half years. She presently works at *FYEO*

in Southampton, but also teaches *FYEO*'s public pole dancing courses held in London. **Sam** notes that she would never dance fully nude. Earlier in her interview, she indicates how the club that employs her does have a license for fully nude dancing, but had not, and will not, implement it. This decision she notes is based upon a number of considerations including, the lack of competition in the area, the risk of lowering the 'standard' of dancers the club could employ, the lack of interest from the present workforce and the demand of clientele. As a result, she affords a sense of respectability to the club's management for this decision. In addition, she implies that dancers who work as topless only dancers have different, and somewhat superior, professional standards to those that work as fully nude dancers.

Southampton where they've got the license for fully nude they never done fully nude there because there's no competition. They think the standard there would drop. None of the girls want to do it there and cause we haven't got any competition. Also there's a lot of students there and they usually, they don't feel the same. They don't want it. Like business guys, business men from here [*London*] do. So no they just go topless up there [*Southampton*].

Jim, a manager at *FYEO* in London, reinforces **Sam**'s idea that topless only dancing is associated with a different type of individual than fully nude. His conclusions focus more upon the physicality of dancers, but in doing so he links beauty to the integrity of those individuals that choose to not dance fully nude. Those that dance fully nude are a different kind of 'breed' with different motivations. Those that refuse to dance fully nude are 'professionals', many of whom are models. By comparison then, fully nude dancers can only be less professional. This in turn, gives an impression that those who dance fully nude have a different sense of, or less, integrity than

those that would not. He did not imply, however, that club's reputation was negatively affected by decisions to implement a fully nude license.

Certainly when we were topless only the standard of girl was a lot higher. But going full nude has opened it up a lot more because it's the money issue that's the sole thing. It was £10 topless and now we're £10 topless, £20 full nude. So technically a girl's income could double over night. A lot of the topless girls, these are girls that made promo work, topless print work that don't want to go full nude...they sort of dwindled off. Probably just gone back to what else they were doing which could have been print work or video work or calendars, that sort of stuff. They're not dancing. Full nude is too much for them.

Acceptable levels of nudity, however, are not uniform among the stories. Other dancers exert efforts to neutralize the stigma associated with fully nude in comparison to topless only dancing through rationalizing the insignificant 'real' difference in coverage provided by topless only dancing. They also emphasize the conditions under which fully nude dancing occurs, thereby making it acceptable. Furthermore, some dancers infuse positive value into the work by emphasizing the beauty of the female body. For many of the dancers that work or have worked at fully nude jobs, acceptable levels of nudity are different than for those who only have experience as topless only. **Lesley**, as noted above, notes topless only was classier, yet at the same time she rationalizes the difference of coverage provided by the underwear worn in topless only as "little knickers that look like eye patches". In doing this, she attempts to rationalize her previous experience as a fully nude dancer and minimize any stigma associated with that aspect of her working life.

Michelle is a twenty-one year old who has worked at various establishments in London over the past two years. She presently works at *FYEO* in London, but also works at another busier exotic dancing club at least two nights at week. **Michelle** also dismisses any real distinction between topless only and fully nude dancing. She sums up the difference as “they’re [*thongs*] are like a maximum of like two cm square between the amount of material like naked or not naked”. For her, acceptable levels of nudity are not defined by differences between topless only versus fully nude dancing.

Sheena has been dancing at *FYEO* in London for the past year. She is 27 years old and intends to dance as long as she enjoys the work or until something better related to her training in cosmetics comes along. She rationalizes fully nude dancing as acceptable by minimizing the distinction in visible exposure of the body. She describes how in fully nude dancing clients cannot really see the dancer’s genitalia even when she removes her panties. “The dances like, upstairs, it’s really dark you can’t, so you’re not allowed to put your feet out onto the floor and stretch out or anything, they can’t see anything, that’s fine”. Thus, fully nude is not really nude. In this way, with no real differences between the two types of dancing both are acceptable.

Lisa has been a part-time dancer at *FYEO* in London for the past seven months. She has not worked at other establishments in the industry and sees it as a means to supplement her income from her daytime job. She hopes to put away £10,000 before leaving the industry. **Lisa** negotiates acceptable levels of nudity by emphasizing the beauty associated with the female body. This moves the focus away from topless only versus fully nude to look at

other aspects that are not stigmatised. Displaying the naked body should be celebrated and embraced. For her, topless only or fully nude becomes irrelevant as either is fine and she re-presents a non-stigmatised view of the work.

Macro considerations also provide insight into making sense of the construction of the psychological barriers. Local authorities review all licensing applications separately and make decisions about whether a club can operate as an exotic club or not. They also determine the conditions under which this can occur. In theory, licensing restrictions including, short operating licenses and CCTV camera installation, can vary from club to club. In practice, decisions made by the same governing body, however, usually mirror previous decisions. Decisions about the extent of nudity legally permitted, that is, topless only versus fully nude, however, are not determined on an application-by-application basis. They are policy level decisions made by the municipality in question. All clubs operating in an area must adhere to the restrictions of that policy decision. In other words, a club in a topless only area cannot operate as a fully nude bar. A topless only bar, however, can operate as just that within a fully nude jurisdiction. Research conducted by Jones, Shears and Hillier (2003) on planning and licensing policies and regulation of lap dancing clubs in the UK indicate that these standards vary from region to region. This is also confirmed through the accounts told by both dancers and managers. There are no real national or international standards prescribing acceptable levels of nudity, at least not according to legal bodies (Jones et al., 2003). National planning guidelines pertaining to leisure development in cities do inform local authority initiatives to enhance the viability of towns and cities (e.g., some

claim the growth of lap dancing clubs support the move towards the “24 hour city”) (Jones et al., 2003). There are also supranational policies created by the European Convention on Human Rights (e.g., everyone is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions) that guide some local authority licensing decisions (e.g., Westminster City Council) (Jones et al., 2003). Overall, regulation is fragmented across the UK. Based upon the stories of dancers and managers, cultural and social considerations also influence how commercial nudity is viewed (and stigmatized), but this too varies. The ambiguity surrounding what exotic dancing should look like means dancers can construct, influence and negotiate with themselves and others, that is, partners, management, friends, and society, the meaning of acceptable nudity. These barriers establish somewhat fluid standards that dancers and others use as a comparison to judge their own behaviour and that of others. The expectations and behaviours associated with acceptable levels of nudity inform the construction of identities some of which are viewed more favourably than others.

The clubs are also affected by these macro considerations. The *FYEO* Mayfair location has operated as a fully nude club since the fall of 2002, following the relaxation of rules by license granting bodies in the area. **Jim** indicates *FYEO* had little choice in London, but to go fully nude once competitors began operating as fully nude establishments.

We've been fully nude I think for eight months. For us as a venue we have to keep up with the Jones. Everyone else in London was going fully nude, we have to follow suit. Otherwise our product is not as good as the guy down the street. And London as big as it is, isn't that large and when you [*customers*] got so many choices there, you [*FYEO*] can't limit your options.

Jim also indicates Westminster Council was one of the last in England to permit fully nude dancing. The relaxation of rules, as described by **Jim**, seems at odds with the discourse of surveillance described in Chapter Five. The archival accounts imply the industry is virtually unregulated and that it requires much more stringent regulation and monitoring. **Jim** does note that clubs in Westminster have had to “prove themselves that they can run a safe, clean environment” before the fully nude prohibition was removed. This relaxation of legislation about the extent of nudity permitted may mean increased surveillance in other ways.

FYEO in Newcastle operates as a topless only club, where dancers are expected to remove all of their clothing except their underwear. The Newcastle location has been topless only since its inception and management does not plan to request a change in the license to fully nude in the near future. This decision is partially influenced by the strong opposition exotic dancing clubs in the area have experienced over the last couple of years. Applying for a fully nude license would surely draw more negative attention to the club.

Overall, the decisions of *FYEO*, whether as a result of macro considerations or not, may play a role in dancers’ attempt to construct and negotiate psychological barriers as it pertains to acceptable levels of nudity. The differences across the clubs, that is, some as fully nude and others as topless only, on one hand, may serve to create more confusion for dancers looking for cues to support what they perceive as more favourable views of acceptable nudity. On the other hand, the lack of institutionalized definitions

may create space from which dancers can engage, confront, modify and negotiate definitions they deem more favourable. The dancers' and clubs' attempts to negotiate definitions of acceptable levels of nudity also illustrate the precarious nature of the discourses of bad sex. The messages of the bad sex discourses are circulating and indeed pervasive. The position of exotic dancing as bad sex, however, may not be completely embedded. As the discourse of art and entertainment emerges, as well as the clubs and dancers challenge and construct alternative ways of positioning the work, exotic dancing may establish a unique place. In this way, the discourses, organizational efforts and dancers' efforts can be seen to be mutually constitutive in how exotic dancing is positioned and how dancers come to make sense of who they and others are, in this context.

6.1.2. Alcohol and Work

Similar to negotiating acceptable levels of nudity, dancers negotiate the extent to which drinking while at work is, and should be, tolerated in order for the job to be taken seriously. Most of the dancers comment on the easy access to alcohol during working hours. In fact, many clients are more likely to offer to buy a drink for a dancer than to purchase a dance from them. This process of socializing, drinking and chatting is integral to making clients feel at ease and in control. As discussed in Chapter Five, *FYEO* enforces rules on appropriate drinking behaviour. Drinking in excess is vaguely defined as "alcohol influencing your dancing or attitude whilst in the club" (House Rule 7 Mayfair *FYEO*). At the same time, the clubs recognize the consumption of drinks as a part of dancers' strategies to build rapport with clients. Furthermore, drinking or accepting drinks is encouraged by

management to increase the earnings of the club and of waiting staff. This sends conflicting messages as to what is acceptable and expected behaviours regarding drinking at work. The clubs say drink, but only according to their rules. This is evident in the comments made by **Terry**, a manager at *FYEO* in Newcastle.

I mean in the rules it says that you're not allowed to be drunk while you're here. Mostly it's sort of part of the job. The girls are going to socialize with the customers in here and they are going to have a few drinks. What we ask is to do it in moderation. We're came quite clear, say right if you get caught drunk you know we'll fine you. We'll send you home, you'll be suspended, all sorts of ways that we could do it. I mean like we've suspended a girl for a month and that can be quite heavy.

There is also a particular sense of femininity emanating through these rules. On the one hand, it is polite to accept drinks from clients, yet a 'woman' must also maintain her composure and not overdo it. Otherwise, she risks jeopardizing the transaction with the client and this could negatively impact the reputation of the club. Coupled with this notion of femininity, is a constructed sense of professionalism based upon recognizing and addressing the needs of customers to ensure the delivery of a high quality service for a 'legitimate' business.

Alcohol serves as a 'social lubricant' for some dancers to put them and their clients at ease. **Amy** is a nineteen-year old dancer who has been dancing for eight months. She is presently working at *FYEO* in Newcastle, but has also worked as an exotic dancer in London, as well as Paris. She is dancing to pay her way through her university studies. During the first three weeks of working, she said she needed a couple of drinks every night to ease her

levels of anxiety. During the pole dancing course, **Sam** also suggested we all have a drink to ease our nerves. This was a tactic she still uses on most nights. Other dancers note that the individual needs to monitor or establish particular rules about alcohol consumption and work. The limits of acceptable drinking differ from dancer to dancer. **Lesley** indicates that easy access to alcohol means drinking and dancing often go hand in hand for some dancers, and that they “are so used to it that [*they*] don’t realize what [*they’re*] doing”. **Nancy** has been dancing at *FYEO* in Newcastle for fourteen months. She was working as bar staff at *FYEO* before becoming a dancer. She is twenty-one years old and plans to dance until she starts university again in the next few months. She also notes that some dancers “can’t come to work without a drink” and it can become a problem. As a result, both **Lesley** and **Nancy** construct and enforce self-imposed drinking policies to support particular identities and distinguish between private and professional activities.

Appropriate - inappropriate norms of behaviour rest on a continuum between non drinking decisions at one end and excess drinking decisions at the other end. **Lesley** adopts a moderate policy by limiting her drinking to weekend shifts. She notes that she needs to be “very strong minded and willed and like sort of like push yourself like” to not drink too often while working. Other dancers impose far stricter policies of abstinence while working. **Anna** has been dancing for a year and has recently started work at *FYEO* in Newcastle. She has worked in Tokyo and Ireland as a way to travel and see the world. She works for a few months, then travels, then works again, and so on. She is now finished her travelling and is saving money for a car and house payment. **Anna** notes that she never drinks at

work, even when she first started dancing. For her alcohol and work do not mix. For her, drinking and encouraging clients to buy her drinks are a distraction from making money, her primary objective of employment. **Denise** is a student-dancer at *FYEO* in Newcastle and has been dancing for five months. She plans to dance while she is completing her university studies and supplement her income initially when she graduates. She also makes a choice not to drink at work because she feels she does not work as hard if she is drinking. Similarly, **Lana**, also a dancer in Newcastle, emphasises the need to reflect upon the role of work in her life and the requirement of separating work and pleasure.

I don't drink at work anymore. It's all about self-control really, isn't it? You've got to like step back and take a look at yourself. You know at the end of day it's a job, it's like any other job, you've got to treat it like that. It's not a night out really. I mean I know you can sit down and have a laugh, but you've, at the same time you've got like realize there's no point ruining the rest of your life just for a few hours. It's not worth it. It depends on how you look at the job really.

Lana has been dancing for four years and like **Lesley** she started in the industry as a "stripper" working for an agency. She has worked in a variety of establishments and indicates that she has a lot of different experiences to reflect upon. She is not sure how long she will continue dancing, but does not see it as a life long employment option.

In constructing and adhering to these policies individual dancers view themselves as rational and in control of their lives, both within the boundaries of work and outside work. It also is a means to separate public and private lives. Public lives are professional and non-emotive, while the

emotive and carefree aspects of life should be contained to private lives. Dancers also use their negotiated alcohol and work rules as a basis of comparison in evaluating job performance. Dancers that adhere to abstinence or drinking in moderation (however defined) at work rules are seen more favourably among their peers than those that do drink at work or drink 'irresponsibly'. Attention is redirected to the serious, professional and legitimate nature of the work they perform. In essence, there is also a sameness implied across work in general. Drinking would be considered inappropriate and unprofessional in other types of work and so it is with this type of work. Coupled with this, the expectations of the clubs, albeit somewhat conflicting, also play a role in the negotiation of acceptable drinking behaviour.

6.1.3. Distancing

Constructing psychological barriers also emerge through efforts to construct a sense of remoteness or space between oneself and others in public and private domains. Through nondisclosure techniques with friends, family, co-workers and other constituents, as well as projecting disgust and resentment, dancers distance themselves from the more stigmatized elements of the work and create a superior image of themselves compared to other individuals and groups.

Some dancers develop strong friendships with co-workers that extend beyond organizational life. Others, however, distance themselves from co-workers for various reasons. In maintaining collegial relationships with co-workers that do not extend beyond organizational life, individuals retain a

sense of objectivity and professionalism in the work they perform. In legitimate work places, work is work and relationships at work operate on a professional and impersonal level and do not overlap into private life. This sameness of work attributed to exotic dancing and other forms of work also demonstrates the hegemonic nature of legitimate organizing, that which is objective, rational and non-emotive (Brewis and Linstead, 2000).

Furthermore, the self-employed, piece-meal nature of the job means dancers vie for the attention and money of what can sometimes be considered a finite client base. Dancers view the competitive nature of the job as a psychological barrier to establishing deep relationships with co-workers. For example, **Amy**, a dancer in Newcastle, met her best friend at work and they now live together. She also notes, however, that with everyone else at work she maintains only informal and superficial relations. Similarly, **Anna** indicates the competitive nature of the job increases the potential for conflict. The best strategy to deal with this is through separating oneself from the intimacies of work place relations.

You got to keep to yourself. I always keep to myself. I don't get involved in any politics cause politics do go on and if you don't get involved, well then you don't have to listen to it. You don't get targeted. And if stuff is said about you, you don't have to hear about it. The majority of people you make friends here are not really your friends. You think they are but they're not really.

FYEO also intervenes in this notion of 'no friends allowed'. As discussed in Chapter Five, *FYEO* tried to enforce a 'no dating clients' rule, but it was too difficult to monitor. They do, however, still attempt to restrict partners from visiting the clubs when girlfriends are working.

For some dancers, nondisclosure is a way to segment their social lives and establish safe areas and identities unaffected by the stigma associated with the work they perform. It also is a way to manage the expectations of others and keep particular identities they enact in certain parts of their lives separate from stigmatized selves. Dancers that are completely open about their jobs to their friends, family and partners are rare. Both **Lesley** and **Sam** indicate everyone important to them are aware of the nature of their jobs. Interestingly, however, despite their disclosure both these dancers still use stage names as a means of separating themselves from their work.

It is more common that dancers confide in close friends and partners, while not confiding in their parents. Interestingly, when asked about this, dancers indicate they do not want their parents to worry, that their fathers are old fashioned or that their parents are religious. The place of exotic dancing as dangerous, not legitimate work and morally wrong held by others influences how dancers manage these relationships. Here we can see the discourses of bad sex as emerging from the popular press archives and relationships with others intertwine with dancers' efforts to construct particular identities, within and outside organisational boundaries. In turn, dancers limit the conflict they experience in identity construction by not revealing details of their occupation. **Lana**, **Carrie** and **Nancy** all illuminate feelings of uneasiness in their fathers having knowledge of their jobs, due to their expected reaction. This contrasts with their reasons for telling or not telling their mothers as is evident in their comments below.

Friends know, but my family live away. I wouldn't tell my mother or my father for the simple reason, I think my mother would probably worry about me being in a situation like this and my dad, he's Italian, he's a bit old fashioned, I don't think he would approve. I think if my mother didn't worry I would tell her because I know she wouldn't be judgmental, whereas I don't tell my dad because I know he's judgmental (**Lana**).

Neither of my parents know. My friends and my sister know but not my mom. I don't get on with her so I just won't tell her. Purely because I don't want her to know. And my dad's really old fashioned, so I wouldn't tell him (**Carrie**).

A lot of people do have strong opinions about it, don't they? You get people that you don't mind telling. I mean my mom knows what I do but my dad doesn't because my dad very old fashioned and he'd go mad (**Nancy**).

Some dancers express disgust as a means through which to manage their own feelings and shape their identity. This disgust is also directed towards the clients, other dancers and the industry as a whole. The expression of such emotions allows dancers to both differentiate themselves from others in the industry, as well as shift the stigma from themselves to others. It also allows them separate their professional and personal selves and create space for unspoiled identities.

Most dancers highlight the empowering nature of their jobs and emphasise that there is nothing wrong with what they do. This is discussed in more detail under Balancing Freedom and Oppression. Paradoxically, however, dancers hold a lot of resentment toward individuals willing to paying for the services they provide. Some dancers group all men together. **Alex** refers to

all men as “very fickle, very shallow”. Other dancers make a distinction between men who frequent the clubs and men who do not. **Tian** has been dancing at *FYEO* in Newcastle for six months and intends to stay there for another two years while she is completing her university studies. **Tian** refers to customers as “sleazy men”. Similar to **Tian**, **Angie**, a nineteen-year old dancer at *FYEO* in London who has been dancing for three months, notes that the men who frequent the clubs are not reflective of all men, “I just think the ones that come in here are dickheads”. This disgust directed towards customers illustrates the competing feelings dancers experience. They desire the freedom, control and empowerment afforded through the job, yet dancers create ways to detach themselves from other constituents associated with their jobs. Dancers attempt to neutralize the stigma attached to their identities by transferring the stigma to their clients.

Other dancers focus upon the adulterous behaviours of the men who visit the clubs. **Lesley** indicates that a lot of the clients “got wives and partners” and you rarely hear “oh I don’t want a dance I’ve got a girlfriend”. Dancers shift the moral taint from themselves to clients. This transference of disgust allows dancers to position themselves in a superior light to their clients. As discussed in Chapter Five, infidelity and family destruction are posited as consequences of exotic dancing. Those performing the work are catalysts for this moral crisis. Dancers comment on how they are targeted by interest groups when the Newcastle club opened first. Dancers refute the claims by emphasising the fantasy and non-sexual nature of their jobs. Dancers negotiate the stigma by denying responsibility or injury.

Distancing is also achieved through transferring disgust to fellow dancers. Dancers express real contempt for dirty dancers and draw a clear distinction between appropriate dancing (e.g., non contact) and inappropriate dancing (e.g., contact, extra services). **Ronnie** is a part-time dancer at *FYEO* in London and has been dancing for two months. She is twenty-four years old and intends to stay dancing for another two months to pay off some bills and put some money aside. She really struggles with finding her place in the industry and shaping her sense of self within that paradigm. She expresses frustration with herself about working in the industry given she has a university degree and is unable to find work related to her training. She struggles with her decision to not tell her partner where she is working. She has told him she is working as bar staff in a club and thinks the dishonesty has had a negative impact upon their relationship. She expresses real disgust for everything about the industry, including herself, however, she directs this disgust towards her colleagues more so than towards anything or anyone else. She notes most of her colleagues are “competitive and bitches”. She also describes an incident where she noticed another dancer masturbating for a client while she, herself, was dancing nude for a client. **Ronnie’s** own client noticed she was distracted so she apologized to him by saying “sorry but I think that is disgusting and it bothers me”. While such incidents are not common at *FYEO*, it is a critical incident for **Ronnie** in managing her emotions through comparisons and positioning herself in a unique position to her colleagues. **Ronnie** indicates that the dancer must have worked in a dirty club where such acts are condoned or expected before coming to *FYEO*. As a result, **Ronnie** only associates with one other dancer, **Lisa**, another part-time dancer at *FYEO*.

Michelle does not share **Ronnie**'s contempt for her colleagues, however, she does advise new dancers that they need to be confident and separate themselves from other, less supportive dancers. Dancers that engage in 'dirty' acts or are competitive in nature are used as a point of comparison to position an individual's own identity more favourably.

You just have to be like really strong, really confident and you can't listen [*to*]...like bitchy girls and gossip and slightly older [*dancers*]. Just don't listen to them. Like you know it's just talk, purely, they don't know you.

In response to what **Anna** indicates are unfair stereotypes about dancers, she rejects the notion that dancers are unintelligent and abnormal, feelings often expressed by clients. She defends herself and her colleagues, describing herself as goal oriented with career aspirations. **Anna** places herself in a superior position to other dancers that do not have other employment opportunities or plans. Furthermore, in an attempt to make her argument more persuasive she adds comments which implies dualisms of intelligent - unintelligent and normal - abnormal dancers from which to compare herself and the dancers she thinks are similar to her. The boundaries of what can be considered legitimate reasons for dancing, however, are not clearly defined. She is dancing to pay her way around the world and save for future investments. Individuals not dancing as a means to an end are the ones that should be stigmatized.

Most guys come in and they think you're just dumb. And as soon as you've had a dance for them, they go 'why do you do this, you're better than this?'. It's just not true, the girls that do this and that actually have a goal and do it for a reason...are normal, are intelligent and are going somewhere. But people who just do this as a dead end job tend to live up to what people think.

For these dancers managing identities involves positioning others in a negative light. In this way, it allows them space to construct their own unique, more positive identities. It also establishes expectations of appropriate behaviour at work, that is, acceptable notions of sex work. The parameters of acceptable sex as work are narrowly defined for some of these dancers. Those dancers that do not fit within these boundaries provide a way out or an 'other' from which dancers can compare themselves, an other that is always inferior.

There is not much disgust or resentment directed towards *FYEO* and its management. In this regard *FYEO*, with its non-contact and other strict policies, serve as a benchmark that dancers use to construct comparisons within exotic dancing and across the sex work industry. Clubs known for dirty dancing (e.g., contact dancing, sexual acts beyond what was permitted in licenses), however, are drawn upon in dancers' identity work. As noted above, dancers associated with these clubs are viewed in a negative light. Clubs that condone and encourage such behaviour are 'dirty' (**Sam**), 'scary' (**Anna**), 'disrespectful of dancers' (**Alex**) and provide less secure working conditions for dancers (**Lana**). By positioning themselves with *FYEO*, a well respected club (**Lisa**) where dancers are "well looked after" (**Nancy**), dancers elevate their position within the industry. In addition, by defining other clubs or dancers or sex workers as inferior, dancers associated with

FYEO are automatically placed in a position of superiority. Sam's comments illustrate the dichotomy of nice versus dirty clubs and how *FYEO* is placed in the former position, thereby allowing dancers to draw on the other, dirty clubs, when attempting to manage their own feelings.

Well there's always incidents especially working in London. With such a variety of clubs in London, a lot of them are really dirty clubs, a lot of them are nice. So this [*FYEO*] is a really nice club. But obviously you might audition a girl that comes from a particular bad club, she might come in and feel that she can get more money by doing things when other people aren't looking. But this club's really good cause we'll keep an eye on it and if the girl's caught doing anything like that she'll be sacked.

Overall, dancers distance themselves from the work they perform, their co-workers, other clubs and other types of sex work in an attempt to minimize the taint associated with the work they perform and how they make sense of who they are, within and outside organisational boundaries. The distancing serves as a psychological barrier to rationalize their place in the industry and in some cases separate their work-based identities from other identities associated with their 'private' lives. In constructing a more positive sense of self, dancers emphasize their position relative to other 'dirty' dancers, 'dirty' clubs, unintelligent co-workers, competitive co-workers and "sleazy" clients. In this way, dancers can construct a superior place for themselves compared to the inferior 'other'. In one way, these efforts can be interpreted as challenging the discourses of bad sex that echo the criminality, immorality, public disorder and deviance of exotic dancing and sex work in general. In another way, however, by constructing the 'other' as inferior and in effect, aligning the 'other' with the bad discourses, dancers' efforts to

unsettle their unfavourable position does little to confront the stigmatized place of exotic dancing in general and the sex industry as a whole.

6.2. Performing

In retelling stories about themselves and their work dancers describe how they exert great efforts in presenting themselves in particular ways. Certain aspects of their physical appearance, as well as particular interpersonal skills contribute to dancers' fulfilling perceived expectations of various constituents, including, clients, managers, co-workers, and partners. These efforts are interpreted as a performance of sorts. A 'performance' is defined as efforts and activities of an individual that serve to influence the perceptions and behaviours of others. In many ways, these performances occur to meet what dancers or the clubs perceive as the expectations of constituents, in particular, clients. These performances are supported and shaped by the organization's attempts to construct a specific organizational identity based upon exclusivity and 'high quality' service. The processes that illustrate the performance aspect of identity construction for this group of exotic dancers include, Gender Scripts, Fantasy and Exclusivity.

6.2.1. Gender Scripts

Similar to other service-based occupations, dancers require strong interpersonal, adaptability and intuitive abilities to identify and address the varied needs of clients. There are also expectations about the physical appearance of a dancer. This part of the performance requires dancers to constantly be conscious of their bodies and engage in various activities to

meet a particular 'feminine' aesthetic. All of these 'skills' are integral to the labour required for the job, however, they are also tied to more embedded social codes of 'being a woman'. The work then requires dancers to act out certain Gender Scripts, that is, behavioural and physical expectations constructed through social, economic and political arrangements, of being a 'woman'. Clients, typically men assumed to be heterosexual, and the clubs expect dancers to act out Gender Scripts to ensure an authentic performance. While clients are not the focus of this research, these men also play out particular gender scripts in their interactions with the dancers at the clubs. There is some room for dancers to negotiate these scripts, however, dancers seem to mostly conform to the scripts, at least on a surface level. Overall, 'doing gender' (West and Zimmerman, 1987) is seen to be a process whereby dancers are expected to present themselves in 'feminine' ways that are patriarchally determined.

6.2.1.1. Adaptability

An important element of the job is to develop rapport with clients. The ability to ascertain the wants of a client is integral to a successful earnings strategy. Many clients are not only interested in the physicality of a dancer, they also expect good conversation and the attention of a young woman. **Michelle** describes how a dancer's ability to be sensitive to the 'social' needs of clients can sometimes be more important than the physical appearance of a dancer. "I know six foot, busty supermodel style, long blonde hair, absolutely gorgeous and then less attractive ones earn far more money because of the things they've said...being seductive, some girls are like more sexy than others even though they might be less attractive". **Alex**

also notes that many clients do not frequent the club for dancing, rather “some men want a chat, they may be here for business and they’re bored sat in their hotel room so they come in for a chat and a drink”. Dancers need to be able to judge very quickly the desires of clients and perform to meet those expectations.

Anna describes how she learned what appeals to most clients and how she uses this knowledge to increase her earnings. Her comments also illustrate how she is able to act out particular feelings and roles to service the desires of clients without having to identify with the role. **Anna** has a routine that most clients like. She performs that same routine over and over for clients and it requires little commitment of physical or mental effort. She knows what facial and body movements are required to produce the desired response in clients. She indicates how she can deliver this without having to engage emotionally with the tasks or with the clients. In this way, she separates herself from the task at hand and her work-based identity.

I think it’s taught me a lot more about men though.
Like I can, I wouldn’t say manipulate them but I
know how they think a lot more now. Well, here it
sort of teaches you, you have to be smart to get a
dance out of a guy. So it kind of teaches you to
think what to say to them, what appeals to them
what doesn’t appeal to them. I guess even during
the dancing. You might do a particular move and an
interest will spark up in a guy. I’ve kind of picked
up on different things that most guys seem to like.
For every dance now, I can do it with my eyes shut,
I have a routine that works.

The flexibility and intuition required by the work is also evident in **Sam’s** stories. Moreover, her comments also highlight how some individuals find

managing job requirements to ensure the right performance more daunting than others.

Flexibility, like your personality, you've got to adapt to different situations. Sometimes you get stag parties and you've got to be like 'yah, come on lads you're in for a dance'. Sometimes you also get customers that come in they're very wealthy, very distinguished guests and they're interested in company. You have to be able to be very quick on the ball. You have to be able to assess the situation as you're coming up to the table. You need to know instantly whether these blokes are going to want you to be loud or outgoing. Definitely, if you're shy it's incredibly difficult to do, because you've got to go up to complete strangers and make conversation with them.

Dancers' interpersonal skills are especially important in performing sit-downs. A client expects the dancer to capture his attention during what might be several hours at a time. This is a good way to earn money, however, **Sam** indicates that some dancers prefer to dance for different clients, rather than perform a sit-down with one client. Sit-downs can be very boring and draining. This is an example of the difficulty that can be experienced in sustaining identity roles required for job success and how dancers manage these struggles. If dancers cannot give an authentic performance, as required by the organization and client, they sometimes choose to engage in alternative strategies that require less effort or less management of emotions in their performance.

But the thing is with sit-downs is that it is quite boring. You've got to find conversation with someone that perhaps you've not really got something in common with for that amount of time. So a lot of girls just prefer dancing.

As discussed in Chapter Five, *FYEO* regulates the performance of suitable interpersonal skills through its explicit house rules. Appropriate facial expressions, topics of conversation and behaviours are prescribed and enforced to ensure an authentic performance and successful transaction.

The perceived or real sincerity of emotions necessary for a successful performance is easier to maintain for some dancers if they like the client for which the emotions are displayed. **Carrie** distinguishes between a regular client she thinks is obsessive because he refers to her as his girlfriend and another regular who she thinks feels that “it’s not real. He just likes to come in and look at girls and dancing and stuff”. In this way, her clients that do not challenge her boundaries between personal, that is, relations with partners, and work life, are viewed more favourably. This makes it easier for her to perform for these clients and engage and display the desired emotions without struggling with the manufactured identity. Similarly, **Sam** notes that some customers you “really connect” with and that makes it easier to display or engage in the appropriate feeling rules without experiencing any internal conflict about the effort required to do so.

6.2.1.2. Bodywork

Physical appearance is also integral to the transformation involved in dancers’ identity work. Every night dancers take time in the dressing room to apply make-up and tanning products, style their hair, polish their nails and select clothing for the evening. As discussed in Chapter Five, the importance of physical appearance is emphasized in the clubs’ selection processes. Generally, screening involves dancers performing a half-song

audition for management. There is no real interview process and, as **Terry**, a manager in Newcastle, notes, decisions are based upon an individual's rhythm and stage presence. Stage skills, that is, a dancer's pole tricks and appearance are emphasized.

Some dancers go to great lengths to achieve the 'right' image. None of the dancers discuss altering their appearance through medical procedures such as breast implants, however, other, less serious, decisions are contemplated. **Tian** describes how she thinks her skin colour is too pale. She is frustrated by the difficulty she has in bronzing her skin. She is not comfortable using tanning beds on a regular basis because of her concern with repetitive exposure to ultraviolet lights and the threat of skin cancer. She also has trouble using self-application products because the products irritate her skin. Despite these complications, she still insists that a bronzed body is a feature that makes her more appealing and exotic.

The gendered scripts as manifested through the bodywork, that is, wearing make-up, styled hair, specific clothes, tanned bodies, and toned physique, portray a somewhat narrow depiction of 'femininity'. There is, however, some room for individuality in creating or conforming to the embodiment of the ideal woman. There is no one ideal woman defined by the gendered scripts. In striving to make themselves fit into particular moulds for clients, the notion of a perfect 'woman' is something that dancers indicate varies from client to client. **Rona** is a twenty-one year university student who has been dancing at *FYEO* in London for about three months. She has only danced at *FYEO* in London and intends to continue dancing to pay her way through university. She notes that there is some space for dancers to appeal

to the different interests of men without becoming someone else physically or feeling inadequate with their bodies or overall appearance. In this way, 'doing gender' may offer small spaces for change.

Don't worry if you're not blonde with colossal like breasts because men don't necessarily like that. I was concerned that I might not do very well, but as I found, men don't necessarily come here for like little fake Melinda Messinger kind of thing. You know men have different tastes completely.

Another element of the expected performance is body movement. All managers and most dancers indicate that one of the key elements in selection decisions of *FYEO* is how a dancer moves. **Sam**, as both dancer and teacher, in the pole dancing course describes how moving slow on the stage, as well as during tableside dancing is critical in creating an illusion and fantasy. The *Pole and Tableside Dancing School Manual* lists *FYEO*'s tableside dancing basic moves. Five categories of moves, including *FYEO* Breast Teasers (e.g., breast caress, nipple squeeze), *FYEO* Head Turners (e.g., head roll, neck exposer), *FYEO* Pelvic Pleasures (e.g., pelvic grind, pelvic rub), *FYEO* Bump and Grind (e.g., bump, cheek slap), and *FYEO* Body Stroke (e.g., thigh rub, hair caress) are presented as pointers for new dancers in producing appropriate or desired movements for clients. The technical elements (e.g., particular movements), practicalities (e.g., fill your three minutes) and illusion (e.g., make the client wonder by removing your clothes slowly) are ways to ensure a successful performance without the client thinking you are simply acting out a role. These expectations are underpinned by an assumption that heterosexual desire is uniform, at least in this context. Dancers contend clients have different interests, yet the expectations of movement noted here portrays a very narrow depiction of

heterosexual desire. This occurs to such an extent that performance of bodywork takes on a parody-like enactment of heterosexuality.

There is also an expectation to dress in a certain way while working. Dancers buy clothes through independent dressmakers designed specifically for dancing. Many dancers change outfits throughout the night, matching clothes to stage shows they perform or to stimulate interest in clients in the club. On one busy Saturday evening, I observed both **Jeannie** and **Kim**, two dancers that were not interviewed, change their outfits three times during a three-hour period. Not all dancers, however, engage in this process. **Ronnie** resists some of the bodywork she is expected to perform as a dancer. She never buys new outfits and notes that it is fine if she has to wear the same dress every night. She tries hard to set herself apart from her co-workers who take the work seriously. Her refusal to spend excessive amounts of money on multiple outfits is one way through which she can distance herself from her co-workers and the work in general. She does, however, engage in some of the other forms of bodywork described above including, applying make-up and painting her nails. Overall, dancers conform to or act out certain bodywork requirements, while negotiating other aspects as a means to challenge expectations or separate themselves from other dancers or the work they perform.

Dancers are also very conscious of their weight, physical fitness and age in presenting themselves to clients and other colleagues. *FYEO* creates or reinforces this pressure to be thin through its selection processes. **Trina** has only been dancing at *FYEO* in London for four weeks. She enrolled in the pole dancing course and auditioned at the club when she completed the

diploma programme. She auditioned twice before she was hired by *FYEO*. At her first audition she was told she needed to lose weight. She lost weight, re-auditioned a few weeks later and was hired. **Anna** also notes that you have to look like “a real woman” in order to be successful in the industry. It is expected that dancers “can’t be overweight, but you don’t have to be stick skinny either”. Dancers struggles with weight did not really emerge often in the stories of the dancers, however, all of the dancers that worked at both clubs were slim. It is difficult to ascertain these struggles from the stories heard, however, this aspect of the bodywork may be so normalized that it has become internalized by dancers and the clubs. Overall, integral to ‘who’ dancers are at work is how they look and act.

6.2.2. Fantasy

Part of the performance of identity work involves Fantasy. Exotic dancing is constructed as a form of entertainment with no basis in reality. It is an enactment of imagination with dream-like qualities. Dancers reconstruct themselves through stage names, stage shows, and taking on different roles for different clients. In viewing the work as the performance of a fantasy the dancers, management and the clubs rationalize the industry and their position in it. It is not real so there are no real moral, social or physical consequences. This can be seen as an attempt to neutralize the stigma associated with the work. This part of the performance also emerges through the discourse of art and entertainment as discussed in Chapter Five. The discourse of art and entertainment highlights the carefree and entertainment aspects of the work. The efforts of the dancers and the clubs to position exotic dancing, *FYEO* and those engaging in the work in this way, align

with the messages emanating through the discourse of art and entertainment. The relationships between the dancers, clubs and the discourse are seen to be mutually constitutive in positioning exotic dancing in a particular way, and thus how dancers re-present who they think they, and others, are.

Each dancer is expected to perform stage shows throughout the evening. Dancers are not paid for these performances. These performances are viewed as “free advertising” and if they “perform really well... and make eye contact with people and...smile at people and stuff” many of those watching will purchase a dance after the stage show (**Carrie**). For some dancers, the stage shows have an intrinsic value beyond the potential for direct economic benefit. They are seen to be exhilarating and empowering, allowing an individual to illuminate other elements of their persona. **Nancy** notes that the stage shows are less restrictive than “dancing between someone’s legs” and “you got a lot more time to express yourself” on stage. **Denise** expresses similar views to those of **Nancy**. When **Denise** first started dancing she indicated that she felt the stage show was intimidating, however, over time this changed. She describes how she views her stage show as her time to shine in a room crowded with many attractive women.

I love it now, I prefer being on stage now to doing table dances cause you can do more things. I mean you’ve learned a lot of pole tricks. I mean it’s a big thing when you’ve got all these people. If anyone comes in watching and they’re like ‘god’ and you’re like ‘that’s cool’.

The enthusiasm and excitement required for the stage shows as noted above often involves inducing feelings that results in more than producing the

desired state of mind in clients. Dancers themselves attribute positive emotions to the effort required by this part of their work.

During the grand stage show that occurs mid way through a night at the club, dancers are introduced by their stage names. The introduction also involves a description of the dancer's ties to some exotic country. For example, on stage **Maggie**, a dancer at *FYEO* in Newcastle, is described as Moroccan, while in her interview she describes herself as British with no mention of any connection to Morocco. **Maggie** is twenty years old and has been dancing for one year. She has danced at other establishments, both topless only and fully nude, in the UK and in Europe. She plans to dance for another two years while she is completing her university degree. Most dancers use stage names to facilitate "playing a part" (**Alex**) and fulfilling the role they are expected to play by clients and the organization. Others indicate that the stage name allows them to separate the roles they play at work with whom they are outside of work. The stage name allows them to maintain some "privacy" (**Trina**).

Sam notes that for some clients the "no strings attached" company of "a nice young lady without having to take them out and spend lots of money and all the rest of it" provides clients with a form of harmless entertainment. For other clients, the club is a means through which clients can feel wanted and appreciated by young women.

Sometimes [*clients*] really enjoy the buzz of having the money to come in and being able to have a girl sit there and drink champagne. A lot of these men wouldn't be able to attract young girls anywhere else. So it's their little fantasy being fulfilled.

These comments also illustrate the gendered notion of what it is to be a man in this context, that is, a provider playing the dominant role in relationships with women. As a result, women are portrayed as dependent and non-confrontation. A heterosexual fantasy is also privileged. *FYEO* claims it is not a male-only domain, however, a particular heterosexual male fantasy is played out over and over.

Playing out the fantasy also entails elements of nondisclosure as discussed under Constructing Psychological Barriers. Dancers struggle to keep their personal lives separate from the roles they play at work by limiting the amount of 'real' information about themselves they express to clients. **Denise** fabricates everything she tells clients about herself and changes her roles frequently, "one night [*she*] likes being Nancy, the next night Susie". **Nancy's** comments below illustrate how the performance is perceived to be authentic and how clients do have difficulty distinguishing between fantasy and reality. She reinforces, however, that dancers do have separate professional and private identities and she rationalizes the performance as simply part of the job.

I look at guys in here and I don't really like to get to know them. The regular customers that come in here, I know a lot about them but they don't know much about me. And I prefer to keep it that way because I'm in here for a reason. I'm here to do a job. A lot of times men aren't that bright and they can sort of confuse your job with your actual real life. They think you're like this all the time.

Boundary management, as discussed under Constructing Psychological Barriers, is not always a simple process. In effect, public and private domains overlap. Both **Lesley** and **Michelle** use stage names and act out for

their jobs, yet both dancers met their present partners while working. On the one hand, these two dancers claim they adopt particular identities for the appeasement of the clients and these performances are not reflective of who they ‘really’ are. On the other hand, the division between self at work and self outside work is difficult to maintain and often becomes blurred. These manufactured identities for work may indeed reflect identities or partial identities that dancers enact in their personal lives as well. Maintaining consistency in the fantasy of the performance also poses a challenge. Most dancers are able to maintain consistency in their stage names. In becoming “anybody you want”, however, it becomes increasingly difficult to remember roles played for particular clients.

Ivy has been dancing for two and a half years at *FYEO* in London and Newcastle. She presently works at *FYEO* in Newcastle. She notes how she has “lied loads of time” and she cannot always keep up with all the role playing. This emerges from her comments below.

When they say where are you from it’s like I don’t even know where I’m from. I start saying these things, and they say speak freely. I say oh my mother is half Greek and half Irish. They just take everything on. And you can’t keep up with it. I had this guy who came back in [*to the club*]. The [*first*] night I went over to him probably had been a bad night and I put on the French accent to try and get more money, cause it works sometimes. The next time he came back I couldn’t remember him. I went ‘how are you doing’, he said, ‘are you not the French girl?’, and this was me with my English accent. It was like ‘oh god’.

The fantasy of the performance also highlights a sense of glamour that many dancers attribute to the work. **Carrie** describes how she wanted to become a dancer since the age of fifteen years old because of how the press portrayed

the work. In the excerpt below she does express some doubt about the accuracy of that portrayal in regards to the earning potential. Earlier in her interview, however, when **Lana** notes that the work is not as exciting as she had expected it to be, **Carrie** insisted it was still exciting for her.

I wanted to do since I was got 15. You know there's a lot of magazine articles. You read about them making £1000 a night and you think how? How do you make that much? I still believe it probably is somewhere in the world but not that much here... Because of the way they portray it in the press. It's like a glamorous, an exciting, so much money job.

Lesley discusses how the image of dancing and dancers is changing. Just a few years ago, she notes individuals would not be as willing to admit they were working as a “stripper” because people would think they were a “slut”. Perceptions are changing partially because of celebrity interest in pole dancing. She draws upon this in constructing a positive image of herself and the work she performs.

It's just been like that really like about three year ago. You wouldn't have dared like turned up with table dancers on videos. But nowadays it sounds pathetic but you hear Britney's doing it, Christina Aguilera and what's her name amm, Jennifer Aniston. All them are doing it. I mean now it's like you know OK.

Tian also notes that her friends think her job is “cool” and are very supportive of her job. This sense of glamour is also strong in the archival analysis as described in the discourse of art and entertainment. Numerous references are made to female celebrities that have taken or are taking pole dancing classes for fitness and fun. As noted in Chapter Five, however, some of the narratives that capture this do carry undertones of criminality,

immorality and the sameness of sex work. This can be seen in the narratives about male celebrities visiting clubs on a night out. Just the same, good or bad, if celebrities are doing it, exotic dancing is given star status. Star status means it is trendy, exciting and very 'now'. Dancers draw upon the glamour in creating a positive sense of self and minimizing the stigma attached to them and the work.

Anna also alludes to the star status of the job in her discussion about the benefits of being known as an exotic dancer. Perks of the job include, "you definitely get local freebees...like you get free drinks, free entry to clubs, free invitations to functions and stuff". At the same time, she indicates there is a downside that also comes with this. Men are intrigued by the sexual possibilities of dating a dancer and "you don't know if they like you for you or for the perception".

Overall, the processes of performing a fantasy allow dancers to emphasize the entertainment, glamorous and leisure aspects of the work they 'perform'. Fantasy also allows the professionalism attributed to skill-based professions like gymnastics to emerge. In turn, dancers and the clubs can deflect the stigma attributed to the work and construct more positive work-based identities. At the same time, dancers separate, albeit sometimes unsuccessfully, these identities from identity work they engage in outside of employment arrangements. These processes align with organizational rules, as well as the discourse of art and entertainment as discussed in Chapter Five. The relationships between dancers' efforts, the organization and the discourse are mutually constitutive in constructing work-based identities.

6.2.3. Exclusivity

Most of the dancers working at *FYEO* use it and other gentlemen clubs as a standard from which to compare other clubs in the industry. Dancers do express some concerns with management from time to time at these clubs, however, most dancers reserve a special place for gentlemen's clubs in the industry. Through house rules, physical surroundings and operating policies, these clubs create an image of exclusivity and class. Dancers draw on these gentlemen's clubs as a base of comparison through which they can associate themselves and disassociate themselves from other clubs and dancers.

At the time of the interviewing, *FYEO* was the only gentlemen's club in Newcastle. Other clubs in the area are viewed in a less positive light to such an extent that they are not even considered as competition for *FYEO*. Even in London, many dancers do not consider other clubs as potential employers. **Alex** views *FYEO* as "family" where management provides protection and treats dancers with respect. As a result, she would "never go anywhere else to work, they're cool [*FYEO*] they look after you". In defining the context as classy, safe, clean and fair *FYEO* uses this as a means of identity regulation to influence dancers' sense of self. **Anna** has danced in many different places around the world and compares her experiences "in the three different countries". "The managers [*at FYEO*] are really respectful and they don't swear at you". She compares this to working in Dublin where managers were very controlling over the dancers and used vulgar language when speaking with them. In these other clubs dancers are treated "like a prisoner" and are not "allowed out after work". In comparison, *FYEO* is seen as a fair and safe place employer to work for, "as

long as you're at work on time they're quite good here. I'd say it's the best I've seen". The distinctiveness of *FYEO* for the dancers is also evident in Maggie's comments below.

It's the only club of this kind in this area [Newcastle]. The distance rule, non contact - you're not allowed to in this club. There's one in Sunderland, but I don't think it's going to be open for very long. It's not really a gentlemen's club, it's more of just a lapdancing bar kind of club. And this [FYEO] is a gentlemen's. Quite classy. People come in, you got to be seated at all times, there's waitress services. It's a proper gentlemen's club where the other clubs that's around, there's one in Middlesbrough, there's one in Sunderland, but they are like in a different kind of league.

Maggie also notes *FYEO* is strict in its rules and the enforcement of those rules, however, it is the strictness that made the club "classy". Otherwise, the club would have "trashy" dancers and a different clientele. Other clubs are viewed more negatively and in turn so are the dancers that work at them. The favourable organizational identity of *FYEO* allows dancers to create positive identities for themselves. This positive sense of self is intensified when dancers' offer other clubs as a point of comparison. It also shifts the stigma from *FYEO*, and by association the dancers they employ, to other clubs.

In defining other clubs as less stable, more sexualized, less economically beneficial and less safe, *FYEO* is elevated to a higher position in a hierarchy of sex work. In turn, this superiority transfers from *FYEO* to the dancers working at *FYEO*. Dancers draw upon this exclusivity to make comparisons across the exotic dancing industry, as well as the sex industry as a whole to neutralize the stigma attached to their identities and transfer it to others.

These processes illustrate the nature of the relationships between dancers, *FYEO* and broader discourses. The relationships between dancers' struggles to construct more favourable identities for themselves, *FYEO*'s efforts to construct a particular organizational identity, and the discourses of public (dis)order, criminality, deviance and immorality, and surveillance as emerging from the newspaper archives are mutually constitutive in work-based identity. *FYEO* constructs a positive organizational identity based upon exclusivity and high quality service that supports, or is supported by, the discourse of art and entertainment, while also confronting the taint of 'bad sex' as constructed and sustained by the discourses of public (dis)order, criminality, deviance and immorality, and surveillance. At the same time, dancers draw upon *FYEO*'s efforts to construct a favourable position for itself in the industry to set themselves from other clubs and dancers in the industry and reject the bad sex discourses. Coupled with this, dancers draw upon, and partially construct, the discourse of art and entertainment to support their efforts to construct more favourable work-based identities.

6.3. Balancing Freedom and Oppression

In re-presenting their work-based identity, dancers struggle with balancing the empowerment afforded by the work with the risk of entrapment and feelings of exploitation that accompany it. On the one hand, dancing provides an outlet to financial and sexual freedom, a kind of emancipation if you will. On the other hand, this freedom is in many ways tied to 'doing gender', bound by economic and social arrangements that restrict individual expression of feelings, thoughts and ideas. This can be seen as a form of

entrapment whereby the individual becomes stuck in the industry with few alternative employment opportunities yielding comparable income.

Freedom re-presents the opportunity to do and be otherwise, whether that is in a material sense through increased earnings and more free time or in an emotional or ideological sense through developing a sense of control, self-determination or a different understanding of one's own being. Exotic dancing can be a means to a better lifestyle where the money earned generates greater independence and control over one's life. The nature of the employment contract is such that dancers are considered self-employed. Dancers claim this is a means of expressing choice. They choose when they want to work, how often they want to work and where they want to work – within boundaries. According to **Maggie** it provides a sense of control that other employment opportunities do not, although she does note there are limits to this 'freedom'.

The thing is, we're all self-employed so we work when we want. We're our own boss. We can come to work when we want to work. We can if we want to have three months off whenever. We don't have to give any notice. We tell them when we want to work. It's not the other way around. So we're in charge - to a certain extent.

Flexible working arrangements are attractive for those with other life commitments. **Derek**, a manager in London, indicates that the workforce in the UK is becoming more and more student-based. **Rona**, for example, is completing a science degree and this means she has little time to commit to the structure required in most jobs. "I couldn't fit a normal job around it [*university studies*] so I did hostessing for a while, but I really didn't like that so I thought I might as well give dancing a try". Dancing also serves as

a means to achieve other life objectives. **Sam** indicates dancing is used as “stepping stone” and it is “a good way to earn money very quickly and you...might set up your own business when you’re finished or buy a property or something and you know pay your debts off”. Both **Amy** and **Anna** also describe how dancing enables them to travel, something they otherwise would not have been able to do. In a similar way, **Lisa** and **Ronnie** are also saving money from their earnings to fund future travelling plans. Dancers emphasise these aspects of the work to draw attention to the positive opportunities available to them by working as an exotic dancer. In turn, this focus allows dancers to minimize the stigmatized aspects of the work they perform and the stigma associated with their work-based identities.

Dancing also entails a period of self-discovery for some dancers whereby the individual reflects upon her own sexuality and the sexuality of others. These reflections open up new possibilities of being for the individual. These new possibilities, however, complicate an already messy process of identity construction. Furthermore, for some dancers this is not always a self-enhancing experience. **Michelle**’s decision to start dancing was ignited by her interests in studying art and sexual psychology. She thought dancing would be an interesting route to experience life and discover herself, as well as a means through which she could avail of other opportunities like travelling. This self-discovery is also marked by confusion and uncertainty as she struggles to understand herself in and outside of work. Her comments below illustrate the complex nature of working on her sense of self.

Stripping has completely changed my life *[laughs]*. I know it would, but I mean like ahh when I first started like there was just an amazing like self discovery kind of thing. It was like I learnt so much about myself, so much about men, so much about like everything really. I completely changed my thoughts on everything amm good and bad. Apart from being more confident and amm less like you know ashamed or embarrassed or trying to cover your body up in swimming on beaches or at the gym, now I just go around naked and I absolutely think nothing of it. You know I've been like harassed and shouted out and followed things like that. You just know how to handle it basically. I feel really strong, really above men, before I didn't feel like that at all. It's a really hard subject because there's so many different circumstances. So many different like situations you know that are different and sometimes you will feel good as a woman, sometimes you feel bad, sometimes you will feel degraded, sometimes you will feel like you have been put on a pedestal.

Michelle's experiences in her public life transfer into her private life. In many ways she embraces this process. She comments that she is far more confident inside and outside work and is far more comfortable with herself, both physically and emotionally. Her focus upon the life experiences afforded through dancing infuses positive value to the work, while de-emphasizing the stigmatized elements of the work. Through dancing a greater understanding and appreciation of our bodies, our relationships with others and our experiences as a woman are intensified, challenged and revealed. For her, there is value to the individual dancer in regards to increased confidence and pushing personal boundaries, to women in general by confronting embedded norms of what is it to be a woman, and society as a whole through increasing society's comfort with our bodies in general. At the same time, however, she acknowledges the challenging and gendered nature of her work that comes with the new possibilities. Dancing offers

opportunities to construct self-enhancing identities, but this is a complicated and messy process.

Freedom does seem to come at a price. Financial freedom is also the same means by which many dancers feel trapped in the industry, unable to work elsewhere and earn comparable levels of income or take other jobs seriously. Balancing freedom and this sense of entrapment makes managing work-based identity challenging and confusing.

Some dancers note that although the increased income assures them the lifestyle they want, it does so at the cost of trapping them in the industry. **Lesley** has just begun saving as she expresses she cannot, and would not, dance forever. In order to be able to move out of the industry and go back to school or work elsewhere she notes that she is going to have to start saving to secure this future for herself. As illustrated in her comments below, she describes how it is very easy to become accustomed to the level of financial freedom that the job affords her. She also recognizes that the level of income provided through dancing is not likely to be mirrored in other jobs, especially in the North East of England.

It's hard when you get used to the money as well. But you do, you start to like take it for granted, the money, don't yah? You know cause the North East region is not very very good. Like say about £250 probably is the minimum wage really for a decent job in the North East, wouldn't you say? You know we get that sometimes in like one Saturday night.

Lana reiterates **Lesley's** comments and notes it is common for dancers to take the amount of money they earn for granted. **Amy** indicates many dancers plan to get out of the industry sooner than they do "but the money

just gets addictive and they end up staying at it a lot longer than they realize”. Some of the student-dancers explain how they will likely continue dancing part-time even after the completion of their degree to supplement their income in their first “real” job. **Ivy**, in an informal interview a few months after her initial interview, expresses real interest in exiting the industry to do something else but doubted if she actually will do it because of the reduction in income she will have to endure. She expects she can secure a job that will pay £200 per week. Presently, as a dancer, she earns that amount of money on a weekend shift at dancing. She is unsure about working part-time as a dancer as an exit strategy because she is concerned that the money would lure her back into the industry full-time. She claims the only way she is sure she will not return to *FYEO* is if she is fired. **Ronnie** is also frustrated by the very nature of the job, that is, nudity and exploitation of women, and this is further complicated by the financial rewards generated by her work as a dancer. She earns more in one night working as a dancer than she earns in a week as a receptionist. As a result, it is difficult for her to take any full-time job seriously. She has become detached from her professional life and has developed a pattern of jumping from one job to the next in relatively short periods of time.

Dancers also have to sort through the negative reactions they experience from customers and men in general, given an image of dancers as promiscuous, cheap, and as objects of beauty, but no brains. Dancers express that they think men feel dancers are disgusting and dirty because of the work they perform. Clients often assume dancers are prostitutes and ask questions like “where can I meet yah, do you do extras?”, as expressed by **Lesley. Tian** and **Maggie** both indicate men view and treat them differently

once they know they are strippers. **Maggie** notes, “you do get male attention sometimes for the wrong reasons”. **Sam** also notes that many customers feel dancers are different than the women they might meet on the street. Customers ask personal and intimate questions about dancers’ personal lives. **Sam**’s comments below illustrate how dancers confront stigma from clients on a daily basis and that there are a variety of situations that a dancer has to learn how to ‘manage’ at work.

A lot of men think because you’re doing this job they have a right to ask you things like ahh ‘do you do this for your boyfriend’, ‘how much money do you earn’. Personal questions that you wouldn’t ask somebody else. But again I expected that of a man anyway especially a man in a place like this. The typical man in here would be somebody that generally feels that girls in here aren’t the sort of girls that they meet on the street, therefore they can push the line with them. They do tend to try and be a bit more touchy feely. I mean if you met a guy on the street and you were talking to him on the tube he wouldn’t feel the need to put a hand on your knee. Whereas they do feel that they can lean over and start touching your knee here. They don’t worry about asking personal questions and stuff.

Moreover, some dancers indicate that the stigma associated with the industry affects the ways in which management views and treats them. **Carrie** recounts a story about one manager who entered the dressing room unannounced and lingered so he could see the dancers nude. The dancers experiencing this were bothered by the assumption that simply because they were dancers their bodies could be exploited by anyone, at anytime. **Sam** also indicates that if management in the industry did demonstrate more respect for dancers it would make for a better working environment and help to confront the stigmatized image of dancers. The stigma enacted by

managers and clients make creating and sustaining self-enhancing identities at work problematic for dancers.

Dancers draw upon the exclusivity of *FYEO* and the self-employed nature of the employment in constructing positive identities in this stigmatized occupation. As discussed in the Gendered Scripts imposed by *FYEO* and a close look at the house rules, however, freedom is, in many respects, defined by the club. The house rules indicate the amount of house fees required each evening and the general procedure for paying them. The fees charged by clubs vary and **Terry** indicates that some clubs can take up to one half of a dancer's earnings in an evening. *FYEO*, however, aims to take about one quarter of the earnings of dancers. The determination of the amount in excess of the start-up house fees is not calculated in a systematic approach, nor is it employed in a consistent manner. Managers have a general idea as to the level of business at the club on a night and then charge dancers a quarter of this. The income earned by dancers is not uniform across workers and in some cases dancers are charged what they feel is an unfair amount given the income they earn on a particular night. There is no real mechanism in the system for dancers to challenge or contest the calculation of required house fees determined by management. As noted by **Terry** below, there are times when dancers are unable to pay the required fee at the end of the shift and management allows them to pay it on their next shift. This is really the only allowance given to dancers in the determination or payment of house fees.

There's always maybe one who's really only even done one dance in the whole evening. So in that case they just have to owe us the money and they can just pay it the next time they're working. I mean if they give us any hassle about paying then they wouldn't have a job.

In the initial set of interviews many of the dancers indicate *FYEO* was more fair in the fees they charge than the other clubs or agencies the dancers had worked for in the past. **Lana** also notes, however, that dancers have no real control over the fee structure and rules in the clubs if they want to dance. Simply put, dancers accept it or go elsewhere.

I mean at the end of day it's down to their discretion how much they charge. They can charge what they want really, in theory they can charge anything. They can charge £100. It depends on how important your job is to you basically. But you have to in a way respect that's how much they're going to charge you. If you don't like it you can argue with them, but it's not going to do you any favours. Like any job...you know you argue with your manager then it could cause trouble.

In the initial interview with **Ivy** she expresses a level of satisfaction with the workplace arrangements at *FYEO*. She indicates that house fees and the behaviour of management are equitable. However, in a later informal interview **Ivy** expresses real contempt for the management of *FYEO* given the recent decision to increase house fees despite what she feels was a decline in business at the club. Her comments also reveal the absence of job security with the job. My diary notes from that evening describe this conversation with **Ivy**.

FYEO had doubled their club fees during the week from £20 to £40 at the beginning of the night and on the weekends it has gone from £50 - £75 at the beginning of the night. When I mentioned that there were a lot of girls there I didn't recognize, she said a lot of girls have left or been sacked since May because of problems with management. She said the girls have no where else to go in Newcastle (Sirens – all nude) so management know that and they also appear to have plenty of girls, so if some leave it doesn't matter. She said they she felt they should recognize that girls with experience would be better for the place and the regular punters would want some of the same faces. She said that one girl recently complained to management, and they sacked her...she said that they disciplined for dirty dancing but Ivy said that she (the girl who was sacked) wasn't a 'dirty dancer'. So she said she was saying nothing because she had nowhere else to go and couldn't leave yet. She said that to her knowledge no other *FYEOs* were increasing their fees and some of the girls thought that the management were pocketing the extra money they were taking from the girls. When some of the girls challenged them about it, they said that's the way it is, if you don't like it, go elsewhere. So with very little options, they stay or just leave.

Illustrated through these accounts, the self-employed employment arrangements of the dancers mean low labour costs for *FYEO*. It also grants clubs the control and authority to impose a variety of rules upon the dancers. As a result, *FYEO* influences dancers' identity work within and even beyond organizational life.

Moreover, the exotic dancing industry offers few career advancing opportunities for females, despite the number of female dancers employed. The structural conditions of the industry, an industry run by men for men, illuminates just how limited the opportunities are for women to manage, modify and redress their place in the industry, as well as the stigmatized position of the industry. *FYEO* in Newcastle employs a management team comprised solely of men and in the London Mayfair location there is one

female manager. **Jim** notes that ninety percent of management in the industry are males. **Jim** reflects upon the current management and ownership structure and concludes that part of the imbalance is due to the paradoxical situation female managers face in management roles in the industry. Managers earn considerably lower levels of income than dancers. Female managers confront a dilemma on a constant basis. As a female they are aware that if they are to dance they will earn significantly higher income than they do in managing. Dancers also recognise and confront the marginalized position they hold in the industry, but this comes with risks that need to be managed. **Sam** contends more women in management and ownership are needed in order to change the structure of the industry, that is, mostly male management, ownership and clientele. **Nancy** also expresses her objections through voicing concerns to management. Speaking out, however, is something she realizes is risky given management's tendency to terminate confrontational dancers.

I'm a bit of a cow if I don't agree with them. I'll be the first one to mouth off. If I think one night they're taking too much money off us and it hasn't been very busy, I'll go in there and ask them to justify everything. When we have staff meetings I'll be the one that speaks up and goes 'hang a minute that's not fair and we don't like this and blah, blah, blah'. I mean there are certain rules that we have to follow, but then we are self-employed. But we got to follow them because we work here. If we still want to work here, we have to follow their rules.

The notion of 'choice' in regards to employment opportunities for some of these dancers becomes somewhat superficial. This marks a much deeper consideration in understanding work-based identity for these exotic dancers, and sex workers in general. Overall, work-based identity construction involves efforts to balance the self-enhancing aspects of freedom afforded

through the job with the broader economic considerations that constrain dancers from doing and being otherwise.

6.4. Emphasizing Temporality

Dancers and managers use time as a moderator of industry structure, as well as dancers' place within the industry. Temporality emerges through tenure of the job, as well as change in and around the industry. Dancers' physicality, career plans, and the novelty of the job all play a role in tenure. Many dancers construct a distinction between their work as a dancer and their 'real' career aspirations, thereby positioning dancing as less serious, less important, and less permanent work. Dancers negotiate a hierarchy of reasons to justify dancing. Those with a 'legitimate' reason for dancing are viewed more positively than those dancers that consider it a long-term choice.

Dancers that are working while finishing their studies construct differences between themselves from dancers who dance full-time, that is, those who dance as a full-time, permanent job. Most student-dancers emphasize they are working only to fund their education, thus deeming it a legitimate reason, and that they do not intend to stay dancing once they finished their degrees. As discussed earlier in this chapter, dancing is re-presented as a means through which a better education can be achieved, thus infusing positive value in the work. At the same time, however, dancers draw attention to the notion that the job is temporary, thereby minimizing the stigma associated with their decision to dance. It is OK because it is only for a short while and for a good reason. Most student-dancers do not explicitly

state they think there is something ‘abnormal’ about working in the industry, however, they do express a desire to justify and draw comparisons in order to set themselves apart from other dancers. **Tian** emphasizes she is only dancing while she is a student. She intends to quit once she is finished. **Denise** also indicates that people move on to other things once they finish their degrees. “A lot of them came up because they were studying here. Then once they’ve finished at uni or whatever they go back home, they just leave”.

Many dancers who are not students also indicate that they too are only dancing for a short period of time. They have plans to go to university in the near future. Both **Nancy** and **Ivy** note they might continue to dance to finance school in the future, but it is not something they plan to do for a long time. As discussed before, other dancers emphasize the temporality of their employment to serve as a means to travel (e.g., **Anna, Michelle**), save money for future investments (e.g., **Anna, Lesley**), and pay off bills (e.g., **Frankie, Ronnie**) to separate themselves from other dancers with different goals. Through injecting positive value upon their work dancers deflect the stigma associated with such work to others. In a similar way, **Alex** is only dancing to support her professional dancing career. **Sheena** started in the industry because she thought it would be exciting, but as a trained professional make-up artist she too plans to dance only until something else comes along that is more interesting. In this way, **Sheena**, like **Alex**, does not focus upon the stigmatized nature of the job. They redirect attention to the positive aspects of the job, thereby legitimizing the work in some way.

Several dancers highlight the temporary nature of the job in re-presenting dancing as 'not a career'. A career is something serious and long term, dancing is not. **Frankie** indicates, "I've got other things in mind, it's not what I want to do you know it's not my career but it pays the bills". Similarly, **Lana** emphasizes that the job is a means to an end, nothing more. Viewing it this way dancing can be seen as a reasonable way for an individual to get herself on her feet and then move on. Rationalizing the work in this way neutralizes or minimizes the stigma attached to the work, thereby allowing her to create a more favourable sense of self as an exotic dancer.

I think for a lot of people this job just like a means to an end. It's not something that could possibly be permanent, not really. I think there's the odd case where people really haven't got things they want to do. But most of the time it's just something that, it's almost like a stop off I would say. I think that anyway.

Management accepts the high turnover as a feature of the type of work. The club maintains a large pool of dancers so that they will not be negatively affected by the rapid turnover. **Terry** indicates dancers move on relatively quickly for a variety of reasons including, lack of interest, inter-office politics and limited earnings.

Some of the girls go a bit stale after they've worked here a while. Obviously they get caught up in the gossip and get sort of sick of the club and all that kind of thing. And there are certain girls who sort of move from club to club, giving them a new sort of lease on life. I mean I suppose it's the same as anyone if you start a new job in somewhere different it gives you a bit of enthusiasm. But I would say it sort of peaks like the way the work sort of goes up and down. There are times when the girls make a lot of money, and then you know when they're not making as much money they get depressed and then leave.

The bodywork required by the job also becomes more difficult to maintain with age. **Jim** notes that once dancers hit their 30s they no longer maintain the same strict standards physically as they did in their 20s. **Lesley** also comments in a jovial way that age plays a role in her tenure decisions in the industry. The youthfulness and non-serious nature of the work also emerges in her comments. It is OK while you are young, but when the time comes to grow up, this is not an appropriate job.

I've just started being mature I would say about me job. I want to get myself to college this year and sort of think about the future. Because I've figured out like your boobs are not going to be this perfect forever you know [*laughs*]. I mean I won't be able to swing off poles when I'm 50, will I? [*laughs*] you know so [*laughs*], so I mean if I don't want to end up doing this job as a future, which I have taken for granted for so long now. I would say I would maybe do a few, three years, but I want to start concentrating on like saving and thinking about me future.

Unlike many of the dancers, **Michelle** expresses a more long-term interest in dancing. In doing this, she acknowledges that other dancers may think this is not an acceptable path to follow. "Most girls say 'urh what are you thinking about' when I say like 8 years or 10 years. I really do want to do it for like quite a long time". In response to **Michelle's** comments **Rona**

supports **Michelle's** decision, but at same time she notes it is not a permanent type of job, so do it now and get it out of your system. "Well I mean you might as well do while you can cause it's not the sort of job you can do permanently. You may as well if you enjoy doing it, you might as well do it".

Many dancers construct and draw upon the temporality of the work as a means to rationalize their position in the industry. In doing this, however, they construct an other, that is, life time dancers, that are viewed less favourably to those dancing to meet a specific goal or for a specified period of time. If it is a means to an end, then is it 'legitimate' work and thus a more positive process of becoming.

6.5. Sorting Through the Messiness of Identity Construction

The stories offered by dancers illustrate how individuals create, modify and struggle with who they, and others, think they are in this context. The stories are re-presented as processes of identity construction to capture the fluid, complex and ambiguous nature of identity construction. It is through these processes that an individual constructs, challenges, negotiates and comes to understand who she and others are. Several processes emerge through which dancers strategise, whether consciously or not, to become the 'right' person for themselves, clients, co-workers, friends, family and the organization. The identity work entails attempts by dancers to manage their own feelings and boundaries, while complying, negotiating or refuting the expectations that they encounter through their relationships with others, organizational rules and circulating discourses. In this chapter the stories of dancers,

managers, as well as corporate documents and newspaper archival material were re-presented as processes through which work-based identity emerges. Constructing Psychological Barriers, Performing, Balancing Freedom and Oppression, and Emphasising Temporality are described as processes through identity work is experienced.

Dancers are seen to construct psychological barriers through negotiating acceptable levels of nudity and alcohol and work, as well as distancing. In this way, dancers attempt to separate themselves from colleagues, other sex workers and the industry in general. For some dancers this means they can contain their spoiled identities to their professional lives and protect their more favourable identities for other areas of their lives. For other dancers, it also allows them to rationalize the work they perform and minimize the stigma enveloping their jobs and how they come to understand themselves as dancers in this context. For example, if it is topless only dancing then it is okay. To do this, they often construct an alternative negative position to serve as a point of comparison for the meanings they attribute to their own activities. For some dancers, fully nude dancing becomes unacceptable nudity, thus reinforcing topless only as acceptable. Other dancers confront the stigma head on and infuse positive value in the work they perform. For example, some dancers concentrate upon the beauty of the 'female' body and thus exotic dancing provides opportunities for society to become more comfortable with our physical bodies.

Identity work is also seen to involve processes of performance, whereby, dancers describe how they exert great efforts to re-present themselves in particular ways to various constituents. Integral to performing is playing out

gender scripts that are defined as behavioural and physical expectations, constructed through social, economic, and political arrangements, of being a 'woman'. Through adaptability and bodywork dancers 'do gender' and enact a particular 'feminine' aesthetic. In some cases doing gender involves a reflexive acknowledgement, while at other times it is re-told or goes untold as an accepted part of the work and being a 'heterosexual' 'woman'. Exotic dancing as a fantasy is also played out as a performance of sorts in constructing work-based identity. Exotic dancing as a form of entertainment has no basis in reality and thus has no 'real' moral, social or physical consequences. Dancers emphasize the skill-based aspect of the work, thereby drawing attention to the professionalism inherent the work, while minimizing the stigma. Maintaining the illusion of the fantasy for clients, and for themselves, does become difficult to sustain and thus makes identity construction confusing and contradictory. Moreover, dancers draw upon *FYEO*'s organizational identity based upon 'high quality' service and exclusivity to position themselves in a superior position in the industry. As a form of exclusive entertainment, dancers can construct more favourable work-based identities in an industry fraught with stigma. The discourse of art and entertainment also aligns closely with the processes of performance as re-presented by dancers and the efforts of *FYEO* in constructing its organizational identity.

Work-based identity construction is also seen to involve a balancing act between self-enhancing aspects of the financial and 'sexual' freedom afforded through the work and the broader economic considerations that involve doing gender and limit employment opportunities. Moreover, dancers emphasize the temporality they construct in being an exotic dancer.

By constructing a distinction between their employment as a dancer and their 'real' employment, dancers position exotic dancing as less serious, less important and less permanent work. In negotiating a hierarchy of reasons to justify dancing, those with a 'legitimate' reason are viewed more positively than those who consider dancing a long-term employment choice.

6.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the processes through which identity construction 'happens' for a group of exotic dancers. Through the processes various identity roles emerge which dancers draw upon in different ways, to differing extents and at different times. These processes and the development of the identity roles are, at least in part, explained by the discourses and organizational efforts to regulate identity as described in Chapter Five. Dancers efforts, relationships with others, organizational rules and the discourses as discussed in Chapter Five are seen to interact, complement and contradict each other, so that identity construction becomes a mutually constitutive process among these considerations.

In the next chapter, the various identity roles that emerge through these processes of identity construction are discussed. Moreover, a hierarchy of stigmatization as heard (or read) from the stories of dancers and managers, as well as secondary material is re-presented to make sense of how individuals in this context struggle with constructing self-enhancing identities that re-present some coherence in who they think they and others are while balancing various intervening considerations. Emotion work, identity regulation as a form of organizational control, social identity and

dirty work are fused to construct a lens from which to capture the messy nature of identity construction and how the subjective individual makes sense of these processes.

Chapter Seven

Re-Constructing and Balancing Identity Roles

7. Introduction

Chapter Five provided an account of various discourses circulating in the popular press about exotic dancing, as well as how *FYEO* attempts to construct an organizational identity based upon exclusivity and ‘high quality’ service to differentiate itself from ‘other’ clubs. The chapter offered a base from which to contextualize how exotic dancing is positioned in a paid work hierarchy, how *FYEO* actively resists the stigma associated with exotic dancing, and the nature of the work performed by dancers. Chapter Six moved from these macro resources of identity construction to a retelling of how identity ‘happens’, that is, the processes of identity construction as heard (or read) through the retrospective stories of dancers and managers, as well as through the archival analysis discussed in Chapter Five. This current chapter reflects upon the discourses, organizational identity and processes of identity construction to make sense of the various identity roles that emerge from the stories. To emphasise my focus upon the subjective individual, I interpret this discussion as dancers drawing upon various resources in constructing these identity roles. Following this discussion of identity roles, the agency involved in identity construction is described through a discussion of how dancers construct a hierarchy of stigmatization based upon motivations for dancing, types of dancing, and types of sex work in their retrospective identity construction. Furthermore, a discussion of the multiplicity and contradiction, as heard through the stories, also illuminates

how agency may be present even when we cannot ‘see’ it in the behaviours of individuals.

7.1. Identity Roles

As discussed in Chapter Four under the section *Analyzing Interview Text and Participant-Observation Experiences* part of my analysis involved exploring how dancers conveyed thoughts, feelings and experiences in different ways (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2002). Through dancers’ voices, that is, stories of individuals stemming from their subjective experiences, identity roles are constructed (Alvesson, 2000; Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2002). These identity roles serve as labels or categories through which individuals and others ‘order’ and make their experiences intelligible (Hall, 2000; Jenkins, 1996). This ordering is seen to be a part of the individual’s desire for coherence in understanding who she and others are. A discussion of identity roles may appear to be contradictory to my view of identity as a process of becoming, whereby who we are is underpinned by continual emergence and change. Identity roles are often seen to be fixed, marking a final state of achievement, however, this is not how I interpret these roles. The identity roles discussed here serve as a sense making heuristic to understand how individuals construct particular roles to order their experiences relative to others. The meanings attached to these roles may be linked to macro and meso resources, however, they are constantly shifting as individuals interact with others and struggle with balancing their desire for coherence in their sense of self with the multiplicity they encounter along the way. The individual can be involved in multiple roles and is ‘present’ at all times, but to differing degrees and for varying reasons

(Goffman, 1959). The identity roles discussed here therefore are not meant to generalize or lock participants in stable, fixed identities.

Various identity roles emerge through the dancers' stories, including, the *Artist/e*, the *Celebrity*, the *Empowered*, the *Exploited*, the *Good Girl*, the *Professional*, the *Opportunist*, the *Competitor*, the *Dirty Dancer*, and the *Lifer*. Some of these identity roles are re-presented more positively than others. For example, the *Competitor*, *Dirty Dancer* and *Lifer* are constructed as inferior 'Others' from which a dancer can draw upon to position her own identities (e.g., *Artist/e*) in a superior light. In making sense of who she is, the dancer compares her identities to the 'other'. Compared to the other, the dancer positions herself, and others like her, in a more favourable light. The construction of these identity roles are an intersection and interaction between the discourses which position exotic dancing in a particular way, the organization's identity and its attempts to regulate identity of workers, the dancers' relationships with others, and the dancers' struggles to make sense of these resources.

The *Artist/e* emerges through dancers' discussion of the creative, physical and interpersonal skills required to 'perform' as an exotic dancer. This also emerges through *FYEO*'s informal and formal rules, some of which were discussed in Chapter Five. Dancers need to be physically fit and possess a certain amount of physical agility and gymnastic capabilities in order to engage in high quality pole tricks and stage shows. Integral to this is dancers' physical appearance, that is, the *Artist/e* is expected to dress and look a certain way. Weight maintenance, hair styling, make-up and skincare are critical to the *Artist/e*. Coupled with this, dancers also need to possess or

develop a keen ability to assess and address the service requirements (e.g., attentive listener, conversationalist, entertainer) of a diverse clientele. The dancer's ability to perform in a consistent and 'genuine' manner interpersonally, goes a long way in *FYEO* creating its organizational identity centred upon 'high quality' service. Overall, the Artist/e is one who develops and uses creative skills, emotional intelligence and physical displays to engage and entertain others. The interactions between dancers, organization and the discourse of art and entertainment are seen to be mutually constitutive in constructing the Artist/e.

The *Celebrity* identity role also draws upon the discourse of Art and Entertainment as a resource for identity construction. The celebrity can be described as one who lives an exciting and glamorous lifestyle with a high income. This star status may be perceived or real. Like the Artist/e, the Celebrity is seen to be a performer of sorts and this affords dancers special attention. They are recognized outside of workplace arrangements, offered free drinks and special access into nightclubs and restaurants in the city where they work. The Celebrity is one who draws attention, is well known and is popular among particular groups.

Dancing also serves as an outlet for individuals to develop and express confidence in who they are, physically, emotionally, sexually and financially. Some dancers are, or become, empowered through the work they perform. The income they earn allows them to live where they want and buy what they want without being dependent on someone else or worrying about balancing bill payments. The nature of the employment contract at *FYEO* also allows them to choose how many and, to a certain

extent, the weeknights of the shifts they want to work. It also provides an outlet through which many dancers explore their sexuality and become comfortable with their bodies, in and outside work boundaries. In this way, they become empowered sexually, as well as financially. The *Empowered* is one who is confident about herself, makes her own choices and is in control over her own destiny. The discourse of art and entertainment, that is, exotic dancing as fun and good money, as well as the discourse of growth, that is, exotic dancing as a generator of employment opportunities, are drawn upon in the construction of the Empowered identity role.

In contrast to the Empowered identity role, the *Exploited* emerges through stories about unfair workplace arrangements and negative stereotypes inside and outside of work. In comparison to other exotic dancing establishments, dancers generally position *FYEO* in a more favourable light, thereby minimizing the space for the Exploited in their stories. However, accounts from dancers about managers who do not respect dancers' privacy in dressing rooms or who speak to dancers in an authoritative and derogatory manner provide some space for the Exploited to surface. The structure of the industry, that is, an industry primarily run for men by men with little opportunity for 'women' within management or ownership positions, also supports the Exploited role. Coupled with this, dancers' stories of clients who are rude, whether that is manifested through language (e.g., negative comments about dancers' appearance) or behaviour (e.g., inappropriate touching, demanding services that go beyond the operating licenses of the clubs), highlight that the Exploited is a role that dancers construct and can draw upon from time to time. The discourses of public (dis)order (e.g., safety of dancers) and surveillance (e.g., unionization to improve and

protect workplace conditions) also illuminate the macro resources drawn upon in constructing the Exploited identity. Furthermore, in the extant literature on sex work, it is this identity role that takes the dominant position in re-presenting the stories of dancers working in the industry. Overall, the Exploited is one who faces unfair and unjust treatment by others in, and out of, employment arrangements.

Some dancers go through great efforts to focus upon how they are able to construct boundaries between their private, intimate lives and their public, paid working lives. They construct the *Good Girl* role to align with societal expectations about morality, fidelity, and loyalty, while at the same time constructing space for certain types of acceptable commercial ‘sexual’ display. The construction of acceptable levels of nudity (e.g., topless only = good BUT fully nude = unacceptable) allows them to draw upon the Good Girl in justifying how their work does not jeopardize norms of society. It maintains a divide between private activities (e.g., intimate activities) and public activities (e.g., entertainment only). In this way, topless only dancing becomes asexual and therefore acceptable as public activity. As such, dancing as topless only does not threaten commitments to partners in dancers’ private lives. We can also see the Good Girl surface in dancers’ stories of nondisclosure of their work to certain family members or partners to protect more positive identity roles from more stigmatized ones associated with the work. The Good Girl is constructed as dancers draw upon the pervasive nature of the bad sex discourses as discussed in Chapter Five. Overall, the Good Girl is one who is guided by strong morals and values based upon respect for others and herself, fidelity, loyalty and professionalism.

The *Professional* draws upon aspects of the Artist/e and the Good Girl in highlighting the sameness of exotic dancing and other forms of work. Attention is drawn to the specific training and competencies required for the work, just like any other skilled profession. Work is viewed as a rational activity where private and public boundaries are not meant to overlap. The construction of self imposed rules on drinking at work (e.g., abstinence) and maintaining impersonal, but civil relations with co-workers underpin the Professional. In many regards, the Professional is constructed as dancers draw upon the discourse of art and entertainment, however, it also stands to challenge the bad sex discourses where exotic dancing, and thus dancers, are positioned as illegal, dangerous and immoral work. The Professional is one who has specific qualifications, training and competencies to engage in formalized activities. Behaviours of the Professional are guided by the rationality and logic required for legitimate, paid employment.

In a similar way as the Empowered, the *Opportunist* focuses upon the opportunities afforded through exotic dancing. For the Empowered, the experiences and extrinsic benefits of the work satisfy intrinsic needs (e.g., a sense of freedom and autonomy). The Opportunist is guided more by the extrinsic benefits afforded through the work, rather than emotive consequences. The Opportunist sees dancing as a means through which she can save for a new business, finance travel plans, and pay for tuition or other debts. A sense of empowerment or the thrill of the work is secondary to the pragmatic drive for financial security or future aspirations that require significant finances. Overall, the Opportunist is one who makes use of circumstances to achieve immediate gains, rather than being guided by

long-term plans in dancing. The discourse of growth (e.g., employment opportunities) may be drawn upon in constructing the Opportunist identity role.

The *Competitor* emerges as an 'Other' from which a dancer can compare her own sense of self. The 'other' is portrayed negatively in some way so that the dancer's own identity roles are positioned more favourably to herself and others viewed in a similar manner. The pay per dance (or per sit down) working arrangements mean in some cases dancers are competing for finite customer resources. If a customer prefers the performance of one dancer it means less opportunity for other dancers working on that shift. In this way, co-workers are seen as competitors. As a result, workplace relations are often superficial, whereby dancers feel that they cannot trust their colleagues. Dancers viewed as top earners may be resented by other dancers because of the top earners' success. Dancers who engage in 'win at all costs' types of behaviours (e.g., moving in on another dancer's regular customer) are also often despised by co-workers. These Competitors are seen as non-trustworthy or non-supportive by other dancers. Dancers construct the Competitor to position their identity roles (e.g., Artist/e, Professional) in a more favourable light. The Competitor and Opportunist are similar in their non-emotive way of approaching the work, that is, work is first and foremost about generating income. The difference between the two roles, however, lies in that the Opportunist does not necessarily see her success threatened by the success of other dancers. The Opportunist sees the job as an opportunity to achieve other financial objectives and the Competitor adopts a 'win at all cost' attitude to do this. Overall, the Competitor is one who has a strong desire to be better than others. Success

is defined by the individual's ability to demonstrate or establish superiority over others engaged in similar activities. It is more difficult to see how the discourses discussed in Chapter Five are drawn upon in constructing the Competitor. The discourse of surveillance (e.g., call for unionization to improve workplace conditions), however, may be a resource that dancers draw upon in constructing the Competitor. It is more likely, however, that the Competitor draws upon other resources, like social relations with others (e.g., subcultures) and micro factors (e.g., personality). The Competitor may also be linked to the organization's efforts to control workplace activities (e.g., pay per dance payment system).

In constructing the *Dirty Dancer* dancers heavily draw upon discourses and organizational identity as discussed in Chapter Five. Dancers construct the Dirty Dancer as an 'Other' who engages in inappropriate conduct at work (e.g., touching, extra services), is affiliated with clubs condoning such behaviour, and is affiliated with other forms of sex work. In effect, dancers draw upon the bad sex discourses in constructing the Dirty Dancer. The construction of the Dirty Dancer provides dancers with an 'Other' from which to compare their own, more positive identities. Positive identities become even more favourable compared to the Dirty Dancer. The Dirty Dancer is one who engages in activities beyond the acceptable boundaries of behaviour. These activities can be seen as illegal, immoral or unprofessional. Dancers acknowledge the existence of the marginalized position of the work they perform, and construct or draw upon the Dirty Dancer (and the Competitor and the Lifer) to differentiate themselves from the negative stereotypes of the bad sex discourses. Interestingly, while a dancer's own sense of self is enhanced in comparison to the Dirty Dancer,

this is likely to do little in addressing the stigma of sex work as bad work and bad sex enveloping the industry as a whole. The Dirty Dancer also enhances *FYEO*'s organizational identity based upon exclusivity and 'high quality' service. The Dirty Dancer serves as an other from which dancers at *FYEO* can differentiate and compare themselves.

The *Lifer* is also an 'Other' that allows dancers to position themselves differently and justify their work as acceptable when it is short-term in nature to fulfill a particular objective or aspiration. The Lifer is one who works full-time or with a long-term commitment to dancing and with no definite plans to leave the industry. For the Lifer, dancing is seen to be a potential career, not simply as a means to an end. Those who view exotic dancing as a long-term life decision are positioned as inferior to those that see the work simply as youthful fun, easy money, a way to pay for tuition, or a way to save for future investments. This allows dancers a means through which to elevate their position in an industry fraught with negative stereotypes about the type of individuals who work in it. The Lifer is aligned with the bad sex discourses and this allows dancers to position the Lifer as inferior to other identity roles that they may construct.

Overall, dancers draw upon discourses, organization identity, and relations with others to construct identities that allow them to make sense of who they, and others, are. In doing this, they sometimes construct an other, that is, the Competitor, the Lifer and the Dirty Dancer, to use as a point of comparison when retrospectively describing how they view themselves and their occupational status. These others are re-presented in a negative way so that a dancer's own identity roles can be seen more favourably. The

construction of these identity roles is an ongoing project where meanings are constantly shifting and are subjective in nature.

7.2. Constructing and Struggling With a Hierarchy of Stigmatization

As dancers draw upon various resources available to them in their identity construction they both challenge and sustain the position of exotic dancing as bad sex as circulating through the discourses of public (dis)order, criminality, deviance and immorality, and surveillance. While dancers represent their work as legitimate, professional, exhilarating and exciting they also express a need to justify the work they do and their position within the industry. In doing this, they construct, in relation to various resources available to them, a hierarchy of motivations, types of dancing and types of sex work which is underpinned by stigmatization, thus re-presenting exotic dancing as dirty work.

Figure 7.1 depicts a Hierarchy of Stigmatization that surfaces in my reading of the stories of dancers. This emerges from my sense making in understanding how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity and I recognize in ‘naming’ it as such in part I sustain the position of exotic dancing as dirty work. Dancers offer a variety of different motivations for starting and continuing dancing. In retelling their stories dancers rationalize the work they do, many by emphasising the temporary nature of their tenure in the industry. **Derek**, a manager in *FYEO* in London, indicates that more and more university and college students are working in the industry as a means to finance their studies. As discussed in Chapter Six, dancers who are studying at higher education institutions make great efforts

in their retrospective identity construction to distinguish themselves from dancers who are working for other, 'less legitimate' reasons. Dancing to fund education is positioned as a trade-off, but a legitimate one that justifies the individual's choice to perform the work. Many of these student-dancers emphasize that once they finish their studies or become financially secure shortly after completing their studies they intend to leave the industry. For these student-dancers, it is not viewed as a permanent occupation choice, as **Maggie** notes it is "not a career". In one way, the focus upon providing an opportunity to fund higher education infuses the work with positive value, thus minimizing the stigma attached to the work. In another way, by expressing a desire to justify the work and the individual's role in the industry, it sustains a sense of stigma about the work. Furthermore, these student-dancers sometimes give an impression that their motivations are more legitimate than other motivations, for example, dancing for the sake of dancing and considering it a 'real' job. Even dancers who are not presently studying make reference to leaving in the near future to go back to 'school', thus constructing a view that dancing to pursue higher education is indeed an acceptable reason for doing so. Overall, if dancing is a means to an end, then it is viewed as a reasonable thing to do. Some 'ends' are positioned more favourably than others, thus attributing more stigma to the different types of motivations driving dancers' choices. From the stories of dancers interviewed, those pursuing higher education are positioned at the top or as 'the' legitimate reason for dancing. This is followed by those financing travels, those viewing the work as a transition job until something else better suited to the individual's training comes along, those with bills to pay off, those who are young and carefree looking for a well-paying job with little commitment, followed by those that see dancing as a long-term

Through their attempts to construct Psychological Barriers, that is, acceptable levels of nudity, alcohol and work, and distancing, and Performing, that is, fantasy, dancers also draw attention to the type of dancing performed. Different types of dancing are posited as more acceptable, or less stigmatized, than other forms of dancing. The extent of contact and nudity, whether prescribed by the organization or not, is drawn upon as a resource in justifying the work. Furthermore, dancers negotiate a hierarchy of organizations and 'type' of sex work. Dancers associate themselves with the type of sex work and organization that they, and others, view more favourably, that is, gentlemen's clubs. They disassociate themselves from those they view less favourably, that is, clubs that encourage or allow contact between clients and dancers and those clubs that allow other sexual services that go beyond the club's operating licenses to occur. The Good Girl and the Professional are constructed to align with the no contact type of dancing, and thus the more 'legitimate' organizations and type of sex work. The Lifers, Competitors and the Dirty Dancers are constructed as the Other to epitomize the more stigmatized levels of the hierarchy.

The construction of this hierarchy occurs as a mutually constitutive process among macro, meso and micro resources that the individual draws upon in her identity construction. This is a messy process where meanings attached to various rules are ambiguously defined and constantly modified. As discussed in Chapter Five and Six, legislation about what constitutes entertainment versus sex work is a subject of debate. Currently, in the UK exotic dancing clubs operate under a public entertainment license, yet in Glasgow council representations and other anti-sex work advocates argue

for clubs to be categorized and regulated as sex work to recognize the ‘real’ nature of the work performed. Dancers and managers sometimes refer to exotic dancing as a part of the sex industry, yet they are quick to emphasize a distinction between sex work and exotic dancing based mainly upon the fantasy and entertainment aspects of exotic dancing. Furthermore, organizational rules about acceptable levels of nudity vary from club to club, even between FYEO clubs. Some clubs are fully nude, while others are topless only. Moreover, Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) argue that individuals do not enter organizations with ‘clean slates’, rather they enter organizations with socialization experiences from a variety of different aspects of their lives. Newcomers to the exotic dancing occupation may already have formed stereotypes about the industry, clubs and dancers before they start working. This means individuals not only have to construct positive work-based identities drawing upon various macro and meso resources they face, they also have to sort through their own lived experiences about how they view the work and those performing it. Overall, this creates a sense of confusion and ambiguity around what type of work exotic dancing is and how it is viewed by various constituents. This lack of clarity may, on the one hand, limit the chance of unsettling of exotic dancing, and sex work in general, as bad sex. On the other hand, however, without clearly understood definitions it may open space for meanings to be more easily negotiated and changed.

7.3. Struggles of Multiplicity and Contradiction with a Desire for Coherence

= Agency

The complexity involved in identity construction has been described through the retelling of stories of the dancers and managers discussed in this research. Dancers struggle with reducing the uncertainty around definitions of sex work, acceptable levels of nudity, alcohol and work, and the occupational status of sex work in making sense of their work-based identities. Attempts to reduce this uncertainty through constructing and securing favourable identities (e.g., *The Good Girl*, *The Professional*) demonstrate the desire for coherence in identity work. The struggles experienced are partially the result of negotiating the stigma associated with the work, but they also reflect the individual's refusal in accepting the roles dictated by discourses, organizational rules and social networks. Agency is re-presented through these struggles to do and be otherwise. Some of this we can see (or hear) through actions like **Ronnie's** refusal to engage in some of the bodywork expected or **Nancy's** assertiveness in voicing her opinions to management. It is also evident, however, in the existence of multiple identities and the individual's efforts to strive for some sense of coherence in these selves, while balancing the contradictions among these identities. In this way, agency is manifested through multiplicity and contradiction that can only be heard (or read), not necessarily seen. In developing a comprehensive understanding of identity at work and the agency involved in these processes, researchers need to look further than just behavioural indications to 'hear' the struggles that may only surface through the stories. In this way, agency may be present even when we cannot 'see' it. To date, identity at work researchers have not fully captured

agency in this way. My research offers a means through which organization studies' researchers can do this.

We can hear some of these struggles in the multiple identity roles and contradictions that surface through the stories of the dancers. **Lesley** positions topless only dancing as classier than fully nude dancing to distinguish it from other forms of sex work. These other forms she, and others, view as more stigmatized. In doing this, she constructs the role of the Artist/e and emphasises the fantasy aspect of the work. She also highlights the greater earning potential with topless only dancing over stripping, thus constructing the Opportunist. Furthermore, she also negotiates acceptable levels of drinking at work to separate private and public lives and constructs herself as the Professional, that is, as a rational, non-emotive worker, and perhaps even the Good Girl following house rules. At the same time, however, she discusses how she met her present boyfriend while working illustrating how private and public lives do overlap and how identity roles, in this case the Professional, are constantly re-negotiated through lived experiences.

Amy started dancing to fund her travel plans and is presently dancing while she is completing her university degree (Opportunist). She has become more confident about herself as a result of experiences at work and is grateful for the friendships she has developed with one of her co-workers (Empowered). She does, however, struggle with being able to enact the Good Girl required in her personal life. Her relationship with her partner is often strained because of the nature of her work and she indicates how she feels like she is being unfaithful to him, despite insisting the work is fantasy only (Artist/e).

Public and private divides are difficult for her to construct and maintain, and even more challenging to convince others, that is, her partner that these divides do exist. It appears that adopting multiple identity roles facilitates Amy's ability to 'manage' her desire for coherence in how she views herself, as well as how others view her. In this case, if we were only looking for agency in her outward actions her internal struggles of agency would go unnoticed in understanding how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity.

Similar to **Amy**, **Angie** started dancing with a specific goal in mind. As an Opportunist **Angie** dances to finance her university studies and plans to continue dancing until she finishes her degree. She too is Empowered by the work she performs and feels "in control of the whole situation" and "in control of them [clients]". Despite this sense of empowerment she later expresses how she struggles with trying to separate herself from the work and the clients by ignoring what they say and trying "not to think about them" while she is dancing (Exploited). In retelling her stories she also reflects upon the work and her desire to work somewhere else if she could experience the same earnings and flexibility in her schedule. **Angie** notes, "if I could get the same money just by doing telesales, then I'd do telesales". Here again, we can see how Angie retrospectively makes sense of her work-based identity by constructing several different identity roles, some of which she views more positively than others. This multiplicity and contradiction are expressions of agency in how she comes to understand herself and others in this context.

The Celebrity identity role quickly surfaced from **Carrie**'s story about her motivations for entering the industry. She was drawn to the industry because of the associated glamour, money and lifestyle portrayed through the media. For her, the work is exciting and fun. At the same time she has struggled with disclosing what she does to those close to her in her 'private' life. She indicates how she delayed telling her boyfriend about what she did. She also emphasizes the topless only aspect of the work to minimize the dirty work associations of the work performed. Furthermore, she has not told her parents about her job and plans to keep her nondisclosure 'policy' because her "dad's really old fashioned". In constructing the Good Girl she also constructs its counterpart, the Dirty Dancer, to position herself more favourably in comparison to the other. Despite **Carrie**'s interest in her work and her desire to continue working for several more years she still struggles with balancing the stigma and the self-enhancing aspects of her work and work-based identities. **Carrie** also talks about her money earning strategies (Opportunist), but goes further to differentiate herself from the Competitor. **Carrie** re-tells a story about how a fellow dancer had moved in on a client that had paid Carrie for a sit down. **Carrie**'s reference to this dancer as a "fucking bitch" expresses the negativity associated with this dancer and those taking on the Competitor identity role.

Like many of the other dancers, **Nancy** started dancing with a specific goal in mind. Her motivations entailed saving money to go back to university (Opportunist). She emphasizes how her tenure in the industry is intended to be short. Through her stories both the Exploited and Artist/e also surface. As the Artist/e **Nancy** indicates how she would rather be on stage than doing individual performances because "on stage you can go wherever you

want, floor work and you dance for six minutes...so you got a lot more time to express yourself". Despite this 'freedom' she indicates how she tries to distance herself from the clients because they have trouble differentiating between the fantasy of the Artist/e and her "actual real life". She also expresses how she refuses to accept all the 'rules' constructed by the organization, "I'll be the first to mouth off like if I think one they're taking too much money off us". These rules link to the Exploited identity role she constructs in making sense of her work-based identity. Through **Nancy's** stories we can 'see' agency in her refusal to accept the status quo at work, but also through the multiple and contradictory identity roles she constructs in making sense of herself and others, in and around work. Again, here we can see that when we limit our conceptualization of agency to behavioural responses, we will often overlook much of the agency involved in identity at work.

Furthermore, the contradictions that emerge through the retelling of the stories illustrate the possibilities afforded through a critical self-consciousness. Identity is a retrospective sense making process constructed through lived experiences as the individual draws upon various resources. Self-reflection also plays a role in this process and further illuminates the agency inherent in work-based identity. This self-reflection did not always emerge through the co-construction of identity work in this research. This, however, does not mean that the individual is not capable of self-reflection, it may simply reflect the short periods of time I had with individuals to explore these experiences. In both **Michelle's** and **Ivy's** stories, however, a self-awareness of the temporality and conflict evident in their processes of becoming emerges. **Michelle** describes dancing as a process of self-

discovery. Her stories reveal that identity construction encompasses the development of both positive and less positive identities, often at the same time. Sorting through this myriad of emotions proves to be challenging, but exhilarating for her. Ivy is also reflective in her struggles to negotiate acceptable levels of nudity with her co-workers. For her, it seems positive or more coherent identities change over time and what is at one point acceptable may be different as circumstances and the individual changes. Overall, the multiplicity and contradiction that emerge as a result of 'managing' the different resources and a desire to be otherwise reveal identity construction to be a messy process, whereby agency is integral to understanding how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity. Moreover, agency needs to be understood not only as 'resistance' we can 'see', but as well as the internal struggles whereby multiple identity roles and contradictions surface.

7.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter set out to reflect upon how the individual in her processes of identity construction draws upon various resources to construct identity roles. These identity roles are a means through which the individual can 'order' or make sense of her experiences and thus construct a sense of coherence in her work-based identities. These identity roles are not interpreted to be fixed or mirrored across all dancers; rather they are constantly re-constructed and negotiated as individuals draw upon macro, meso and micro resources available to them. In constructing these identity roles, dancers also construct a hierarchy of stigmatization based upon motivations, types of dancing, and types of sex work and organizations to

‘manage’ the stigma associated with the work they perform, and in turn, their work-based identities. In constructing positive identities, dancers justify their position in the industry and position themselves in a higher position in the hierarchies they construct. Less favourable identity roles, that is, the Competitor, the Lifer and the Dirty Dancer, are constructed as the inferior ‘other’ and as a point of comparison to position the individual’s own identity roles more favourably. In doing this, however, dancers are likely to sustain the marginalized position of sex work in the paid work hierarchy.

In constructing these identity roles the agency involved in identity work also surfaces. Dancers assume various identity roles, some of which are contradictory, in striving for a sense of coherence in who they think they, and others, are. Agency can be ‘seen’ in dancers’ actions, like their refusal to engage in various organizational rules. This research proposes that agency can also be heard in the stories of how dancers construct different, contradictory identity roles to sort through the various macro, meso and micro resources of identity construction, while striving to secure a positive sense of self. In the next chapter, I theorize how through this research we can begin to theorize identity at work to capture agency, as well as the various resources the individual might draw upon in making sense of her work-based identity.

Chapter Eight

Theorizing Identity at Work

8. Introduction

This chapter considers extant literature on sex work, work-based identity, and dirty work with the lived experiences of individuals encountered through this research, archival material, as well as my interpretations to theorize identity at work to highlight how we can come to understand the individual as subjective in making sense of her work-based identity. Throughout this chapter I reflect upon the research objectives discussed in Chapter One to illuminate the contribution of my research in understanding work-based identity and organization studies more broadly. The first section of this chapter offers a review of the research objectives outlined in Chapter One. Following this, a discussion of how this research supports existing literature is presented. Specifically, discussions of emotional labour and ‘doing gender’, the nature of identity, and the role of the researcher in co-producing understandings of identity illustrate how my research complements existing literature. Following this, the unique contribution of this research to work-based identity and organization studies more broadly is discussed. An alternative lens for understanding identity at work, that is, a fusion of emotion work, dirty work, social identity and identity regulation as a form of organizational control, is offered as a more complete picture through which to capture the agency inherent in identity work and the diverse, interacting and intersecting (re)sources that the individual draws upon in constructing her work-based identity. Furthermore, sex work as an alternative form of organizing is analyzed to illuminate the complexities of

identity at work, as well as how organization studies needs to move towards conceptualizing organizational life as historical, yet temporal, as well as subjective and objective.

8.1. Revisiting the Research Objectives

In exploring how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity, several research objectives guided this project. Below these objectives are revisited. Throughout this chapter I illuminate how I have achieved these objectives in making a unique contribution to understanding work-based identity.

1. To explore how the subjective individual's identity at work can be understood as a process of multiplicity, contradiction and fluidity.
2. To reconcile distinct literatures, that is, emotion work, identity regulation as organization control, social identity, and dirty work, to develop an alternative, more complete lens for understanding identity at work.
3. To explore the different resources (e.g., organizational rules, social relations, position of work in paid work hierarchy) that an individual might draw upon in constructing her work-based identity.
4. To explore how agency emerges through the individual's struggles for coherence amidst the multiplicity and contradiction that may be involved in her identity work.

5. To explore how looking at identity construction for a group of sex workers can offer new insights into understanding identity at work in organization studies.

8.2. Emotional Labour and 'Doing Gender' as an Exotic Dancer

Hochschild's (1983:17) work on emotional labour draws attention to how organizations increasingly require individuals to 'manipulate' emotions in order to "survive in their jobs" and meet organizational expectations. For Hochschild (1983) emotional labour refers to the outward manifestation of feelings to produce particular responses in others in the public sphere and is sold for a wage or has exchange value. She describes the "transmutation of our emotional system" as the processes in which feelings, usually expressed by an individual for private or personal reasons, are used in public for organizational purposes to such an extent that the individual risks losing their 'real' capacity to feel (Hochschild, 1983:19). The requirement for emotional labour may result in the individual's inability to distinguish between her 'professional' self and private or 'real' self. Hochschild (1983:56) contends our knowledge of appropriate and inappropriate emotions in particular situations is based upon "feeling rules". Feeling rules, that is, context-dependent norms about appropriate emotions, are constituted by various cultural, political, historical and organizational considerations. The persuasiveness of the feeling rule will affect an individual's conformance to the rule and the degree of dissonance when not adhering to the feeling rule. Organizations attempt to engage individuals in "deep acting" so that 'real' feelings are self-induced to increase the

authenticity of the transaction between employee and other organizational constituents (Hochschild, 1983:35). If the feeling is 'real' then it is more believable to the individual for which the feeling is induced. Hochschild (1983) also argues that the requirement for emotional labour is more prevalent in certain types of work than others, for example, service-based work and female dominated occupations. In doing this, she highlights how feeling rules and associated behavioural responses are also tied to broader cultural, social, and political 'structures'. As a result, Hochschild's (1983) work has been drawn upon extensively to illuminate how the occupational status and nature of certain jobs, and those individuals expected to perform the work, are intertwined with how society understands and 'does' gender. Her work has been particularly useful in teasing out the intersections between female sex workers, organizational control and societal norms about what it is to be a 'woman', physically and otherwise. In many ways, the discussions offered in Chapters Five, Six and Seven support existing research on emotional labour as it pertains to sex workers, the nature of the work they perform, and associated expectations.

FYEO's efforts to create an organizational identity based upon exclusivity and 'high quality' service through formal and informal rules was detailed in Chapter Five. The house rules and the *Pole and Tableside Dancing School Manual* emphasize the bodywork involved in the job, including make-up, dress, hair, and weight maintenance. House Rule Six from *FYEO* Mayfair London location exemplifies the required bodywork involved in being employed as an exotic dancer.

All dancers are required to wear elegant evening wear to come below the knee, cat suits, two pieces and high heels (if open, toe nails must be manicured) until 12am, after that any costume/dress (please check with management). Hair and makeup to be of required standard. If you want to change your hair drastically, consult the management.

Coupled with this, the clubs also create expectations about appropriate feeling rules required for job performance. For example, house rules at *FYEO* Newcastle location indicate that dancers are, not to "... laugh, talk or make faces when dancing for a customer, when your back is turned. Give them 100%, they are paying for it" (House Rule 17 under Dancing, Newcastle *FYEO*), "be discreet about recognising any customer, especially if they are a celebrity they might not want lots of attention" (House Rule 22 under Dancing, Newcastle *FYEO*), as well as "don't run around the club. It can cause accidents. If you bump into a waitress and spill her drinks you will have to pay for them" (House Rule 23 under Dancing, Newcastle *FYEO*). As discussed in Chapter Six, dancers also emphasize the importance of these expectations in their stories. **Sam** discusses how sit-downs can be challenging because dancers have to carry a conversation with a complete stranger for hours at a time. As a result, some dancers prefer to dance, rather than do sit-downs because of this. Both **Ivy** and **Denise** also discuss how they perform different roles to meet what they perceive to be the expectations of clients. **Ivy's** comments also allude to the difficulty in keeping track of which roles are performed for different clients. Furthermore, in performing the job, **Ivy** indicates that the club requires them to "put yourself up to become a lady...up hold yourself and you can't just start running around the place". **Sam**, **Denise** and **Ivy's** discussions highlight the emotional labour required for the job and how these expectations are often linked to notions of femininity.

This notion of femininity, however, is not always clearly defined and often shifts. As discussed in Chapter Five, organizational rules on acceptable behaviour (e.g., not licking nipples) and unacceptable behaviour (e.g., not fully removing underwear) make it difficult to figure out what a ‘lady’ actually looks, and acts, like. Furthermore, these rules vary from club to club (e.g., fully nude versus topless only) making ‘doing’ gender even more challenging. At the same time, however, this ambiguity may create space for individuals to challenge ‘established’ notions of femininity and sex work(ers) as ‘dirty’.

Several researchers illuminate the emotional labour inherent in sex work, albeit implicitly sometimes, through discussions of “counterfeiting of intimacy” (Foote, 1954:162), “cynical performance” (Goffman, 1959:18) and “impression management” (Goffman, 1959:208). Foote (1954:162) first coined the term counterfeit intimacy to refer the dramaturgical aspect of sex workers ‘performing’ intimacy, that is, the intimacy experienced by customers is often imitation, inauthentic, or “counterfeit currency in interpersonal relations”. Enck and Preston (1988) use Goffman’s (1959:18) “cynical performance” to emphasize the instrumental and deliberate nature of the techniques employed by waitress-dancers employed at a topless club in order to secure sales of alcohol and table dances. Enck and Preston (1988) explore how dancers enhance the believability of their counterfeit intimacy, the cues of a successful performance as illustrated through customers’ reactions, and how the organization intervenes in the construction of appropriate feeling rules. They also discuss how the dancer

is in “character”, however, in this discussion they do not refer to this as ‘identity’ construction.

Similarly, Boles and Garbin (1974), Chapkis (2000), Ronai and Ellis (1989) and Wood (2000) all highlight how dancers manage impressions through costume, make-up, facial expressions, body movements, music choices for stage shows and conversations with customers. Furthermore, Bruckert (2002) and Wood (2000) discuss how club owners and managers also use impression management techniques in their own dress code (e.g., suits), as well as via house rules for dancers (e.g., no tattoos). Wood (2000) also details how customers use impression management in their self-presentation to dancers, friends or other customers. For example, customers may attempt to present themselves to dancers as wealthier or more important than the status that their ‘real’ occupation or lifestyle bestows upon them.

Researchers have also explored the disciplining of the body as an instrument of power via traditional gender rules, that is, what is seen as attractive by customers (e.g., thin and large breasts), as well as a tool of management control (Chapkis, 2000; Dragu, 1998; Frank, 2002; Maticka-Tyndale et al., 2000). The sometimes narrow interpretation of what it is to be an attractive ‘woman’ in this industry is illustrated in Chapkis’s (2000:187) work where she re-tells the story of one dancer who indicated, “if you got bigger tits, it’s worth a couple of hundred more at least. I’m telling you, there’s a reason why so many of those women have tit jobs”. Furthermore, many of these researchers emphasize the heterosexuality that underpins the work performed (Oreton and Phoenix, 2001). In their research on the sex / bodywork of a group of prostitutes and a group of therapeutic massage

practitioners, Oretton and Phoenix (2001) argue that workers' efforts to separate public lives as 'not sex' and private lives as 'sex' are underpinned by broad social codes of what it is to be a 'woman'. These workers performing sex / bodywork constantly risk "imputations of disreputability and immorality" by making their 'sexual encounters' public and commercial (Oretton and Phoenix, 2001:387). As a result, "when nested in a public context, there is a denial of sex, and this clearly links to the problematic construction (for women) of public heterosex" (Oretton and Phoenix, 2001:407).

The discussion of organizational identity in Chapter Five and the processes of identity construction described in Chapter Six also paint a picture of exotic dancing as a heterosexual fantasy played out by the 'lonely, rich guy' and the 'beautiful, brainless woman'. I would argue, however, that the exaggerated heterosexual fantasy marketed by *FYEO*, often played out by dancers and embraced by customers becomes more parody-like on the borders of 'hyperreality' (Baudrillard, 1994) than grounded in 'reality'. Dancers emphasize the monotonous nature of their work and how they repeat the same dance routine over and over if it works. On busy nights at the clubs, the intimacy created through the dark lights and plush seating becomes lost to the 'meat market' type of atmosphere where there is little privacy; customers are sitting in very close contact with each other and in all directions you can see a dancer disrobing and then quickly moving on to the next sale.

Through this parody of heterosexuality contradiction also emerges. At times dancers indicate that there is space for them to display individuality in who

they are physically and challenge the notion of the 'ideal' woman. In Chapter Six, both **Rona** and **Michelle** illustrate this in their comments about how it is possible to be successful, that is, in regards to earnings, even when you are not "6 foot, busty supermodel type" (**Michelle**). Similarly, **Rona** notes, "men don't necessarily come here for like little... fake kind of thing, men have different tastes completely". While 'doing' gender is a part of the emotional labour of the work there is some room for this to be negotiated, at least from the stories of dancers encountered in this research.

While acknowledging that labour power, in particular sexual labour, is a gendered phenomenon, Sanders (2005) argues that sex workers are more than sexual objects who are the passive recipients of male demands. Sanders (2005) focuses upon the agency involved in the emotional labour performed by a group of sex workers. She does not, however, 'name' it 'agency', rather she focuses upon how sex workers construct "manufactured identities" to manipulate male sexuality and sexual desire to their own advantage (Sanders, 2005:319). She contends these workers manufacture identities as a resistance strategy to 'control' their workplace. Moreover, both Bruckert (2002) and Wood (2000) illuminate the emotional labour required in sex work, the gendered nature of sex work, as well as the stigma enveloping the industry and the individuals performing the work. Like Sanders (2005), they posit the intersections between power, resistance and identity as multi-dimensional and relational, whereby gendered norms are constructed, sustained and challenged.

Overall, these researchers describe how some dancers see their physical appearance and interpersonal skills as a requirement for the job, an asset

which increases their 'power' over customers and management, as well as an instrument of resistance in challenging norms associated with femininity and how an individual comes to understand herself, and others, in and outside of work (Bruckert, 2002; Chapkis, 2000; Funari, 1997; Maticka-Tyndale et al., 2000). *My research builds upon this work to more explicitly surface the agency, that is, the contradictions, multiplicity and desire for coherence, involved in the individual's struggles to make sense of who she and others are in relation to the various competing and interacting resources she has available to draw upon. My research also more clearly links the identity roles constructed in this process to the various resources available to the individual through which the messy nature of identity at work emerges.* The identity roles constructed by dancers are intertwined with various macro, meso and micro resources which in some ways confront embedded ways of thinking as emerged from dancers' refusal to accept organizational rules to look or act in a certain manner. At the same time, dancers also sustain what it is to be a 'woman' and the marginalized place for sex work through the construction of a hierarchy of stigmatization to justify their position in the industry.

The motivations for dancing, strategies of interaction and feeling rules defined by organizations described in the extant literature are in many ways similar to the discussions offered by this research. Overall, my research offers a similar contribution to existing literature in illuminating the emotional labour required for the work and how emotional labour is linked to organization control and broader socio-political structures of what it is to be a 'woman'. Furthermore, the hierarchy of 'stigmatization' constructed by dancers, as discussed in Chapter Seven, raises some questions as to the

‘real’ space for unsettling the position of sex work as bad work, given dancers’ efforts to justify their ‘dirty work’, relative to other stigmatized work.

The prevalence of sex work as stigmatized also emerges in the existing literature. The existing literature usually refers to sex work as stigmatized and in some cases explores how individuals ‘manage’ their ‘spoiled’ identities (cf., Sanders, 2005; Thompson and Harred 1992). The ‘dark side’ (Holstein and Gubruim, 2000) of identity emerges in this literature, but the sex worker as ‘deviant’ is often left unchallenged. This also draws attention to the role of prior socialization experiences of individuals who become employed as sex workers, in the case of this research, exotic dancers, as discussed in Chapter Seven. If sex work as dirty work is a ‘truth’ individuals encounter prior to entering the industry, the emotional labour required to meet organizational expectations becomes even more pervasive and problematic as the sex worker struggles with her ‘spoiled identity’. *My research more clearly illuminates these intersections between dirty work and identity than the extant literature.* These insights will be teased out more explicitly later in this chapter.

Despite the similarities between the discussion offered in this thesis and the existing literature on emotional labour, sex work and dirty work, in much of the existing literature on emotional labour and sex work, identity is implicit and not the focal point of investigation. Furthermore, even when identity is a key point of exploration, ‘agency’ is often not explicitly discussed, nor are the various (re)sources individuals might draw upon in their identity construction explicitly explored. The ways in which my research overcomes

some of the limitations of the existing literature through fusing emotion work, agency and identity are discussed later in this chapter.

8.3. Conceptualizing and Studying Identity

Following the lead of Braidotti (1994), Jenkins (1996), Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003), Thomas and Linstead (2002) and Watson and Harris (1999) this research has focused upon the ‘how’ of identity construction. In this way, my concern has been with the individual’s process of becoming, rather than ‘being’ or the ‘what’ of identity (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). To do this, through the stories of dancers and managers, as well as archival documents, in Chapter Six I discussed what I interpreted to be processes of identity construction for these exotic dancers. It is through these processes that the individual constructs, challenges, negotiates and comes to understand who she, and others, are. Various processes, including Constructing Psychological Barriers, Performing, Balancing Freedom and Oppression, as well as Emphasizing Temporality, depict how dancers strategize, whether consciously or not, to become the ‘right’ person for themselves, friends, clients, co-workers, and the organization.

Through this analysis, several identity roles emerge as a means through which dancers ‘order’ or make sense of who they are, often in relation to someone or something else. Chapter Seven described how individuals, in drawing upon various resources, as discussed in Chapters Five and Six, construct the Artist/e, Celebrity, Empowered, Exploited, Good Girl, Professional, Opportunist, Competitor, Dirty Dancer and Lifer as a means through which to retrospectively make sense of their work-based identity.

Chapter Seven also discussed how in constructing these identity roles, individuals often associate themselves with multiple, sometimes contradictory and competing, roles. Dancers also exert efforts to construct a sense of distinctiveness by differentiating themselves from others, partly due to the perceived and ‘real’ stigma associated with the work they perform. In this way, identity encompasses both self and social aspects whereby identity roles enable us to sort through, talk about, and make sense of who think we, and others, are (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Hall, 2000; Harré, 1998). Similar to Watson and Harris (1999:vii), who explored the process of becoming for those employed in managerial work, *this research illuminates how identity construction is a messy process whereby dancers “shape their personal identities and their working lives – at the same time as being shaped by the world around them”*.

Individual efforts to make sense of their identities, relative to others, through the construction of identity roles implies a desire for ‘order’, consistency, stability, familiarity or security in knowing oneself and others. This desire is described as a sense of coherence in who individuals think they, and others, are. This desire is often associated with self-enhancing properties or a more positive sense of self. This need for coherence can be very pervasiveness and difficult to ‘achieve’ when competing ‘truths’ or (re)sources indicate otherwise (Brewis, 2004). Thomas and Davies (2005:687) describe this as an “ongoing process arising from the desire to gain the security and comfort that reside in knowing ourselves, and dealing with the tensions and discord that arise from these contradictions”. Similarly, Brewis draws upon Poster (1986) when describing the struggles an individual engages in to balance a desire for coherence with the

multiplicity and flux enveloping identity construction. Brewis adopts a poststructuralist lens drawing upon Foucault in discussing her identity struggles, however, her insights are transferable to my research. “Caring for self involved choosing to live in a particular way within which one determined one’s own constraints” (Poster, 1986:210, in Brewis, 2004:26). With an emphasis upon power and resistance, her work reveals the agency involved in identity work, as well as the various competing (re)sources that the individual draws upon making sense of her identity project. Furthermore, the contradictions that emerge through the stories offered in my research also align with Linstead and Thomas’ (2002:2) conclusions that “identity construction is not a matter of resolving ambiguity and making clear cut choices, but is often characterised by confusion and conflict within the individual, as well as in the context”. *My research illuminates both the coherence and contradiction that are integral to understanding identity at work.*

8.4. Co-Constructing Identity

In exploring the process of becoming, like Coupland (2001), Thomas and Davies (2005), Watson (1998), and Watson and Harris (1999), I have adopted an approach whereby reader, writer and ‘participants’ “work together on a story” (Watson, 1998:139) about identity. In adopting a social constructivist approach, processes of work-based identity emerge retrospectively through conversations about individual experiences. Lived experiences, that of researcher and ‘participants’, inform the story of work-based identity discussed in this research. As argued by Braidotti (1994:35), “you cannot map where to go, unless you have been there”. In other words,

we cannot know who we are until we have been there, thus identity becomes a retrospective sense making process co-constructed by the stories of individuals and those a part of the conversation, re-interpreted by the researcher. My own struggles of identity have led me to this research. My own lived experiences and the developing literature on identity as processual, multiple, and contradictory informed this exploration into *how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity*. Furthermore, in re-presenting the meanings individuals ascribe to their experiences, my interpretations “are constructions of these meanings and therefore a construction of the construction made by the actors studied” (Thomas and Davies, 2005:688). At the same time, as discussed in Chapter Four, to increase trustworthiness and address criticisms of relativism in the research process and discussion offered in this research I drew upon a diverse spectrum of perceptions (e.g., semi-structured interviews, participant-observation, diary notes, archival data) from which to compare, challenge and support conclusions emerging from one particular resource.

8.5. How the Subjective Individual Makes Sense of Her Work-Based Identity

With a focus upon the individual and *experience*, this thesis builds upon existing literature on work-based identity to offer an alternative lens from which to understand how the individual makes sense of her work-based identity. The stories of dancers and managers, along with the archival material as re-presented in this research illustrate the messy nature of identity construction. *What I offer to others studying identity at work is that identity at work cannot be fully understood by exploring the macro, meso*

and micro (re)sources in isolation of each other. These resources interact and intersect as the individual draws upon them. These resources can be pervasive, however, the individual is seen as an active agent in her own identity construction. To date, however, most of the existing literature on work-based identity has neglected or underplayed the role of agency in identity construction (Linstead and Thomas, 2002; Thomas and Davies, 2005). For my research, agency is conceptualized as the struggles in which an individual engages, consciously or otherwise, in choosing to live in a particular way (Brewis, 2004). Agency may be manifested in observable action, however, it may be present even when we cannot observe it. Agency is also evident in the ‘internal’ struggles the individual experiences that can only be talked about, heard and read in their stories. *The processual, multiple and contradictory nature of identity as surfacing from this research illustrates that the individual is not simply subsumed by discursive forces, like relations with others, organizational rules and socio-cultural conditions. The individual thinks, struggles, and acts, drawing upon these resources, such that it becomes a mutually constitutive process.* The dirty nature of the work, that is, the economically marginal and culturally stigmatized nature of the work, does not mean dancers are not agents in their own identity work (Bruckert, 2002). Agency, however, may not necessarily result in ‘freedom’ from structural constraints, nor might it mean coherence whereby there is complete and absolute, favourable understandings of one’s self and others. The individual may strive for a sense of coherence among the chaos that envelopes her process of becoming, however, coherence is likely to be temporal at best. *This research theorizes that emotion work is a useful heuristic for exploring agency in identity work and how the individual plays an active role in her*

identity work. Drawing upon insights from emotion work, identity regulation as a form of organizational control, dirty work and social identity an alternative lens is theorized for capturing the agency inherent in identity work as the individual draws upon various resources available to her. *My research offers a more complete picture for those studying work-based identity. The theoretical approach proposed in this research serves as a useful sense making heuristic transferable to other sites of study.*

8.5.1. Emotion Work as a Heuristic for Capturing Agency in Work-Based Identity

Hochschild's (1983) work on emotional labour has been very useful in teasing out how the organization, as well as broader macro considerations, construct expectations about how individuals are required to 'feel' in and around organizational life. Theorizing identity, however, is only implicit in her discussions about the self and does not emerge as her focal point of interest. Her conceptualization of this self as stable and 'real' is also limited. Guerrier and Adib (2003) argue for a conceptualization of the self that is more fragmented than Hochschild's real self, while recognizing that individuals may desire a sense of coherence in how they understand themselves and others, across private and public realms. It is also unlikely that the boundaries between private and public realms are as distinct as Hochschild alludes to in her discussions of the 'real' self outside organizational life (Bolton and Boyd, 2003). Furthermore, as can be seen in their comments below, Bolton and Boyd (2003) draw attention to the lack of agency surfacing in Hochschild's work.

Hochschild's concern with management attempt to seduce employees into 'loving' the company, its product and its customers, creates an illustration of emotionally crippled actors...arguably disqualifies the possibility that employees may exert an 'active and controlling force' in relationships with both management and customers (Bolton and Boyd, 2003:290).

Bolton (2000a, 2000b, 2005a) and Bolton and Boyd (2003) partially redress the lack of attention devoted to agency and what they refer to as a lack of conceptual clarity around emotional labour / emotion work to a certain extent in their typology of emotion work (i.e., pecuniary, presentational, prescriptive, philanthropic). While Bolton's (2000a, 2000b, 2005a) and Bolton and Boyd's (2003) work is useful in bridging some of the gaps in Hochschild's work they focus upon categorizing emotion work, rather than upon the processual nature of emotion work. Moreover, unlike my research, their agenda is not explicitly driven by work-based identity concerns.

Hochschild (1983) uses emotion work or emotion management to refer to internal activities where an individual attempts to manage their own feelings, boundaries and identities – unwaged work in the private sphere. As discussed in Chapter Two, she does not devote much space to distinguishing between emotional labour and emotion work, however, *my research argues that there is room to surface the agency involved in identity work through a re-conceptualization of emotion work*. For this research emotion work is conceptualized as the efforts in which an individual engages in working on her thoughts and ways of understanding herself and others, not necessarily for commercial use, although it may occur within organizational boundaries. Emotional labour then is seen to be a form of emotion work that is manifested through behavioural responses to meet the expectations of

others, in and around organizational life for commercial benefit. Emotion work becomes a useful heuristic for exploring the agency involved in identity work as it captures what we can 'see' as 'resistance', as well as the 'internal' efforts of individuals to sort, process, challenge and accept various conditions and decisions. Emotion work entails different degrees of commitment from the individual. Some emotion work will be more deeply rooted to the individual's broader lived experiences, for example, in identities that play a more dominant role in both private and public realms. Other emotion work will involve managing observable facial and bodily expressions to produce desired responses in others without requiring any sort of attachment to the effort. Through stories spoken, read or heard we can capture agency, that which we can 'see', as well as the internal struggles manifested through the contradictions in the stories of individuals.

In my research, we can 'see' agency in dancers' refusal to accept offers for 'extra services' by clients or 'choosing' to work only a certain number of nights a week. We can also see agency in **Ronnie's** stories of her 'resisting' all the expected bodywork. **Ronnie** describes how she refuses to wear numerous different outfits each night, that is, she wears one outfit only on a shift. She also physically and interpersonally distances herself from other dancers to set herself apart from her co-workers and the work she performs. We can also 'see' agency in **Nancy's** stories about how she challenges management when she thinks they are being unfair to the dancers. **Nancy's** comments below illustrate this.

I'm a bit of cow if I don't agree with them [management]. I'll be the first to mouth off if I think one night they are taking too much money off us and it hasn't been very busy. I'll go in there and ask them to justify everything. When we have staff meetings I'll be the one that speaks up and goes 'hang on a minute that's not fair and we don't like this and blah, blah, blah'.

Although these stories are retrospective accounts and we cannot really 'see' it happen, the responses described above are behavioural and therefore easier to conceptualise as agency. These activities align with much of the extant literature on resistance, whereby resistance is conceptualised and categorized by various behavioural activities, some of which may be a refusal to comply, while other activities may appear to be compliance type of behaviour, but there is a recognition by the individual that they are complying to a particular rule.

In conceptualising agency in the way I do, that is, as the struggles in which an individual engages, consciously or otherwise, in choosing to live in a particular way, it opens space for us to move beyond understanding agency simply as behavioural responses that we can see. This is what much of the literature on resistance tends to do. As a result, in using 'agency' instead of 'resistance' I think it moves us more towards a broader understanding of how the individual plays an active role in her identity work. *In this research, we can also hear or read agency in the multiple identity roles constructed, as well as the contradictions that emerge from dancers' stories. These contradictions illustrate the internal struggles that these individuals experience as they make sense of their work-based identities.* These struggles may not result in dancers leaving the industry or being rude to a customer, but this does not mean agency does not exist. Agency exists

even when we cannot see it and it may only be through listening to the retrospective accounts of individuals' experiences will we be able to capture a glimpse of it. These struggles emerge through my sense making attempts to sort through all the material discussed and experienced in this research as described in Chapter Seven. *This research offers those studying identity at work a more complex and comprehensive way of capturing agency in identity at work.* In understanding emotion work as the efforts in which an individual engages in working on her soul, thoughts and ways of understanding herself and others, not necessarily for commercial use, although it may occur within organizational boundaries, we can begin to understand that agency may be present even when it does not result in observable action and that the individual struggles with balancing her desire for coherence among competing and interacting resources.

8.5.2. (Re)Sources of Identity Construction

In their discussions about identity, Holstein and Gubrium (2000), as well as Ainsworth and Hardy (2004) refer to 'resources' of identity construction. Holstein and Gubrium (2000:161) note, "the self is always build up out of something". For my research, (re)sources of identity construction is a useful way to illuminate the active role that the individual plays in her identity work, that is, the individual can choose to draw upon the various resources available to her. At the same time, however, I recognize that the pervasiveness and persuasiveness of these resources make identity construction a mutually constitutive process of the individual shaping and being shaped by various resources (Watson and Harris, 1999). For this research, 'resources' emphasize my focus upon the individual in work-based

identity and how she might draw upon the various, interacting resources available to her. In this section, I build upon my previous discussion of emotion work as a heuristic for capturing the agency inherent in identity work to reconcile various resources that the individual might draw upon in making sense of her work-based identity. In developing a more complete picture of identity at work, first, I build upon Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) work on identity regulation as a form of organizational control to illuminate how organizations might play a role in the individual's process of becoming. *In looking at sex work as a form of dirty work, I also offer a unique contribution to Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) work to highlight how the type of work performed and how that work is positioned in broader realms increase the incentive for organizations to regulate identity.* Furthermore, this draws attention to the complexity involved in the identity work of dirty workers, whereby the struggles to construct a sense of coherence while 'managing' the various resources available to draw upon becomes even more problematic. In this way, the intersections between broad macro resources, the organization and the individual efforts surface.

Following this discussion, dirty work, social identity and managing spoiled identities is explored. *Individuals' efforts to manage their spoiled identities are interpreted as expressions of emotion work.* Individuals engage in these activities in attempting to manage their internal feelings as they struggle with private and public boundaries. A part of the emotion work entails dancers' efforts to construct and negotiate membership to more favourable, and less stigmatized groups. Here we see the social identity aspect of identity emerge very clearly.

This section concludes with a discussion of how viewing the individual as active in her identity work draws attention to agency, as well as fuses emotion work, identity regulation as organization control, dirty work and social identity in theorizing how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity.

8.5.2.1. Identity Regulation as a Form of Organizational Control

It has been argued that favourable work-based identities and identification with organizational identity may play a role in an individual's 'performance' in organizational settings (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999; Erez and Earley, 1993; Hochschild, 1983). As a result, these researchers contend there is an incentive for organizations to intervene in the identity work of employees to facilitate the creation of self-enhancing identities, and in turn, control organizational performance. Alvesson and Willmott (2002) offer several possible modes of identity regulation through which organizations regulate the identity work of its employees and thus ensure the achievement of organizationally-defined goals. They do not present the modes as an exhaustive list and therefore leave room for further development in understanding identity regulation. To illuminate the processes of identity regulation they call for more indepth studies that consider specific localities of organizational life. Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) work is useful in highlighting how organizational rules can serve as a resource for individuals in making sense of their work-based identities. In the discussion that follows, I draw upon Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) notion of identity regulation as form of organizational control, however, I think it is more fitting to view these efforts of the organization as an intersection between

the individual's agency, broader macro considerations, organizational control and social relations. In this way, we move away from looking for the 'source' of identity construction in a deterministic sense, to the (re)sources of identity construction whereby the individual plays an active role among these competing and intersecting considerations.

The discourses, as discussed in Chapter Five, intersect with the decisions that *FYEO* makes. To confront the stigma emerging through the discourses of bad sex, namely the discourse of criminality, public (dis)order, deviance and immorality, and surveillance, as well as to meet various other organizational objectives (e.g., growth, survival), *FYEO* has an incentive to intervene in the identity work of its employees. *FYEO* exerts efforts to ensure an authentic performance for various constituents. In confronting, minimizing and managing the meanings associated with the work, *FYEO* creates an organizational identity based upon exclusivity and 'high quality' service and strives to align individual identities with organizational identity. The expectations of constituents, however, may not always be the same. For example, some customers may demand fully nude dancing, while dancers may refuse to dance fully nude because they see it as unacceptable, while municipalities may or may not make a policy decision to support fully nude licenses. As a result, managing the conflicting expectations can be problematic for both the organization and the individual.

The intersections between organizational rules to manage this stigma and broader macro considerations emerge through the discourse of art and entertainment. As discussed in Chapter Five, clubs in the UK are licensed under a Public Entertainment License. In a way, this legitimizes the work as

a form of entertainment, despite cries from critics that the work should be licensed as a form of sex work. Moreover, many clubs defend the industry and their position in it through highlighting the stylish, elegant, and exclusive nature of the organizations operating in the industry. The archival analysis also illuminates how many clubs are positioned as a legitimate, law abiding, 'classy' form of entertainment for corporate clients.

Organizational rules as a resource in individual identity work also emerges through the stories of managers and dancers. Managers are quick to refer to how dancers are disciplined if they do not adhere to the various organizational rules, whether formalized in the house rules or otherwise. **Maggie** notes below how every club has different rules, but the dancer is required to know the appropriate codes of conduct at the place where she is working.

Cause every club's totally different and every club has different rules. And you got to make sure you know the rules before you start or you'll end up getting in trouble. You know if you do something.

Maggie also emphasizes that the rules at *FYEO* are strict, but it is those same rules that create a distinctiveness about the club. **Maggie** also notes how the club operates a pole dancing school or as some dancers refer to it, a 'confidence course'. Before hiring some individuals the club may recommend that the individual enrol in a pole dancing course so that they can 'learn the ropes'.

They have a pole dancing school as well. Teaches etiquette and about confidence, like how to walk in a room and feel you know, on top of everyone else. Rather than walking in with your head down and not dare look anyone in the eye. Teaches you how to become confident about yourself.

This notion of learning to become confident as a job requirement is somewhat paradoxical given the implied passivity required for much of the emotional labour required for the work (e.g., a good listener, always polite). **Ivy** also notes how if the “employer didn’t think you fit the profile, they’ll tell you if you would like to go on the course and maybe improve yourself, then you could become a girl which could join after a few weeks”. This leaves an impression that only certain ‘types’ of individuals with the ‘right skills’ are appropriate for *FYEO* given the image of exclusivity and ‘high quality’ service they wish to portray. *It illuminates how the organization serves as an important and pervasive resource in individual identity construction.* **Sam**, a dancer and pole dancing instructor, and the managers do note that only about one third of all people who enrol in the pole dancing classes go on to become exotic dancers. The managers do not see the pole dancing schools as a primary recruitment source or socialization tactic, however, the manual designed for the school and the techniques taught at the course complement the house rules guiding activities at *FYEO*.

As discussed in Chapter Six, in their processes of Performing, dancers construct a sense of exclusivity and draw upon *FYEO*’s organizational identity in their identity work. Most of the dancers working at *FYEO* use it and other gentlemen clubs as a standard from which to compare other clubs in the industry. Forsyth and Deshotel (1997:130) contend gentlemen’s clubs are considered the “upper echelon of nude dancing establishments”

and may become a means through which stripping will become “less deviant”. Forsyth and Deshotels (1997) explore clubs in the United States where organizations operate differently and regulations differ from the UK, however, they too note how dancers view gentlemen’s clubs as a standard to which they aspire to be a part of. *In this way, the intersections between how the work is positioned in broader realms, the organization’s identity, an individual’s previous socialization before entering the industry and how the individual chooses to be otherwise all inform how identity at work ‘happens’.*

To secure a more positive organizational identity, *FYEO* also intervenes in the identity work of dancers through several modes of regulation, as defined by Alvesson and Willmott (2002). This involves *defining the person directly, defining persons by defining others, establishing a distinct set of rules of the game, knowledge and skills, group categorization and affiliation and defining the context.*

FYEO defines the person directly through its specific selection requirements, that is, an individual’s rhythm, stage presence and physical appearance. **Anna**, **Rona** and **Michelle** all indicate that there is room for individuality in appearance, yet there are still certain physical requirements expected by *FYEO*. **Anna** notes you need to look like a “real woman...you can’t be overweight, but you don’t have to be stick skinny either”. As discussed in Chapter Six, **Trina** had to audition twice before she was hired at *FYEO*. She was told she needed to lose some weight before they could consider her as a dancer for *FYEO*. *FYEO* has not formalized its requirements of the ‘ideal’ dancer or ‘woman’ in this context, however, the

unwritten rules of who a *FYEO* dancer is and what she looks like, that is, attractive, thin, well-kept appearance, 'lady-like', emerges, at least in part, as a form of organizational control.

Managers, as agents of *FYEO*, also construct distinctions between exotic dancing as fantasy and other forms of sex work as 'real'. As discussed in Chapter Five, **Jim** explains how exotic dancing is different from other forms of sex work. "It's table dancing, it's not escort takeout, it's not prostitution. We're tableside dancing bars and that's all we are". He notes that "touching and all that sort of thing is reality", whereas tableside dancing is "non contact fantasies". In doing this, he also implies a distinction between those who perform exotic dancing and other sex workers, thus *defining persons by defining others*. **Derek** also notes, "it's a job, that they chose to be here...they're not prostitutes, it's purely entertainment". In noting they are "not prostitutes", **Derek** creates an inferior other from which exotic dancers working in non-contact establishments can be viewed more favourably.

The extensive discussions offered in Chapter Five on *FYEO*'s house rules and various other informal rules illuminate how *FYEO establishes a distinct set of rules of the game* in attempting to regulate individual dancers' identity construction. The processes of identity construction as described in Chapter Six also highlight how dancers, the clubs and broader macro resources intersect to construct acceptable levels of nudity, drinking at work, and gendered scripts. These processes serve as a set of rules that dancers can draw upon, or from the position of Alvesson and Willmott (2002) a form of organizational control to regulate individual identity work. While some of these 'rules' are ambiguously defined and enforced, for example, the extent

of acceptable nudity in different locales, if dancers are seen to be ‘breaking’ the rules the club disciplines them.

Specific knowledge and skills are also used as a form of identity regulation by *FYEO*. As discussed in Chapter Six, **Jim** notes how the “standard of girl was a lot higher” when the industry was topless only. He also comments on how many of the dancers left the industry to pursue other, ‘more professional’ work as models as a result of the change in operating licenses. In doing this, he links beauty and talent to the integrity of those individuals that choose not to dance fully nude. **Derek** also emphasizes how the industry is witnessing more and more student-dancers as a means to finance their studies. Dancing as a means to an end also emerges through the processes of Temporality as discussed in Chapter Six. Furthermore, in constructing a hierarchy of stigmatization, as discussed in Chapter Seven, dancers elevate those with particular knowledge and skills, whether job related or not (e.g., professional dancer, university student) and construct work-based identities that are more positive.

Constructing groups and negotiating membership into these groups is also a resource that dancers draw upon in their identity work. This process will be described in more detail in the next section, however, it is important to note that *FYEO* also plays a role in this process through *group categorization and affiliation*. As noted above, managers talk about how many dancers are in the industry to pay off bills, save for future plans, and finance their studies and that most dancers do not stay in the industry for long periods of time. Dancers have a purpose for being in the industry and then move on. The managers group dancers’ together partly based upon their motivations

for being in the industry, elevating those with a ‘legitimate’ reason above those who are just dancing for the sake of dancing. In scheduling work shifts, the club also often grants similar schedules for dancers who are friends. **Terry** notes how small networks of dancers often request the same time off so that they can holiday together. The club usually does what it can to accommodate such requests. In doing this, the club, whether deliberately or not, facilitates the creation of subcultures in the workplace and this may in turn be a resource that dancers’ draw upon in ‘managing’ their ‘spoiled’ identities, as discussed later in this chapter.

As discussed earlier in this section, *FYEO*’s attempts to construct an organizational identity based upon exclusivity and ‘high quality’ service involves *defining the context*. Positioning the club as safe, classy and clean confronts the bad sex discourses circulating, as well as provides a resource from which dancers can draw upon in constructing their work-based identities. As such, it allows dancers to construct more favourable work-based identities for themselves and those they interact with.

These modes of regulation facilitate the club’s ability to confront charges of criminality, dirtiness and immorality circulating in broader arenas. At the same time, creating a positive image of *FYEO* as a gentlemen’s club minimizes the stigma associated with the work and therefore the workers performing it. This makes it easier for dancers to identify with their work as something positive, thereby reducing the stress involved in the emotion work. In turn, it increases the likelihood of an authentic performance for customers, thus achieving organizational goals. Identity regulation as a form of organizational control, however, does not occur as a deterministic process

whereby dancers are passive actors in constructing their work-based identities. Indeed, the organization's efforts may be pervasive, however, the individual struggles in making sense of the various resources available to her and how she goes about drawing upon them. Furthermore, while Alvesson and Willmott (2002) do call for more research that explores the localities of identity regulation, they do not really embrace how the type of work performed and how that work is positioned in broader realms can make identity regulation and identity construction a more complex process for both the organization and the individuals involved. *This research moves us forward to specifically illuminate how the type of work performed and the organization's efforts to 'manage' its position in a paid work hierarchy intersect and interact as resources from which the individual can draw upon in making sense of her work-based identity. As stigmatized work, these intersections and interactions become more vivid and complex, thus making identity construction a messy process for the individual.*

Ashforth and Kreiner's (1999) research on identity and dirty work does theorize the links between specific localities of work, that is, stigmatized work, and identity. Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) contend dirty workers are likely to find it difficult to establish self-enhancing occupational identities given the stigma attached to the work. They note one way though dirty workers do establish more positive occupational identities is through the creation of strong workgroup cultures. Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) do not focus upon organizational efforts to intervene in these processes, however, they do note that organizations performing dirty work are likely to struggle in attaining external legitimacy. My research reconciles Ashforth and Kreiner's (1999) work on dirty work and social identity with identity

regulation as a form of organizational control and emotion work, the various intersecting and interacting macro, meso and micro resources involved in the individual's sense making processes of identity construction emerge. *This research moves beyond looking at one or two aspects involved in identity construction, to better capture the diversity and complexity involved in work-based identity, something the extant literature has not fully captured to date.*

8.5.2.2. Dirty Work, Social Identity and 'Managing' *Spoiled* Identities

Ashforth and Kreiner's (1999), Bolton's (2005b) and Thompson and Harred's (1992) work on dirty work and identity construction do contribute to our understanding of 'managing' 'spoiled identities' (Goffman, 1963). These individual and group 'techniques' can be interpreted as expressions of emotion work in that individuals engage in these activities in attempting to manage their internal feelings as they struggle with private and public boundaries. A part of the emotion work entails dancers' efforts to construct and negotiate membership to more favourable, or less stigmatized, groups. Furthermore, dancers construct and draw upon the other to set themselves apart from other stigmatized constituents (e.g., clients, co-workers, other sex workers). By highlighting the stigma associated with the other, individuals position themselves in a more favourable light. This serves to *reframe* (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999) the dirty work performed by the individual so that the negative value is transferred to the other. *I argue that this othering is likely to occur in various other occupational settings, not just those categorized as dirty work.* In securing a more positive sense of self it is likely that individuals and groups will engage in othering as a mean to

transform and modify meanings associated with the attributes or skills they possess or the work they perform.

Chattopadhyay et al. (2004) look at organizational life in general and draw on social identity theory and social categorization theory to explain how self-enhancement can occur through the establishment of ingroups and outgroups. Individuals create positively valued ingroups by categorizing themselves and similar others together, while categorizing dissimilar others in less valued outgroups. Self-esteem is enhanced through favourable comparisons of the ingroup at the expense of the outgroup. Higher status categories are created through drawing upon real (e.g., visible) or perceived differences. Chattopadhyay et al. (2004) suggest certain demographic attributes bestow higher status to individuals possessing these attributes than others in organizational life. For example, categories “white” and “male” have traditionally been accorded higher status in organizations than “minority” and “female”. As a result, establishing a positive sense of self is easier to accomplish for these established higher status groups. Higher status groups, however, may still engage in a “status maintenance strategy” (Chattopadhyay et al. 2004:183) to hold onto their higher status. This involves creating favourable impressions of the ingroup through presenting the other as inferior in some way. In effect, they *define themselves by defining others*, similar to one of the modes of organization control proposed by Alvesson and Willmott (2002). Chattopadhyay et al. (2004) also contend establishing self-enhancing identities is likely to be more problematic for lower status category members. They discuss strategies that lower status category members can use to establish a more favourable position for themselves. A *social creativity* strategy entails lower status

members comparing the ingroup to the outgroup on some new dimension or changing the value assigned to the attributes of the group so that comparisons which were previously negative are now perceived positive. A *social competition* strategy involves efforts by lower status members to improve the status of their own category within the organization (e.g., lobbying for the recognition of particular skills traditionally undervalued by the organization). Lower status members may also engage in *social mobility* strategies and disassociate themselves from a lower status group and negotiate membership to a higher status comparison group. These strategies as described by Chattopadhyay et al. (2004) are very similar to the *reframing*, *recalibrating* and *refocusing* strategies of dirty workers as suggested by Ashforth and Kreiner (1999). *This illustrates the potential transferability of the 'techniques' of emotion work discussed in this research to understanding identity at work more broadly.*

Furthermore, Thomas and Linstead's (2002) research on identity and middle managers reveal when there is a lack of agreement over what a particular role or term means, for their research it was 'middle', individuals will experience even more pressure to justify the work they perform. In their research, middle managers draw on the other, that is senior management and first line management, to secure a more positive and legitimate sense of self. In a similar way, Bruckert (2002) argues exotic dancing is not work that can be easily categorized and it exists on the margins of the economy, morality and legality. With little agreement of what constitutes sex work or exotic dancing available through regulation of clubs and acceptable levels of nudity dancers, like the middle managers in Thomas and Linstead's (2002) study, dancers' encountered in this research draw on the other (e.g., dirty

dancer, dirty clubs, prostitutes) to secure a more positive place for themselves. Furthermore, the changing nature of organizational life (e.g., virtual organizing, outsourced activities) is likely to create ambiguity around various other occupational categories and relationships as well. As a result, *this research proposes that othering can be a useful heuristic for exploring the processes of identity construction in organization studies more broadly.* This point will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

Specifically in this research, establishing and negotiating acceptable levels of nudity is an attempt by dancers to transform the meanings attached to their work. Some of the dancers who dance topless only minimize or neutralize the stigma associated with their sense of self through social comparisons with fully nude dancers. **Frankie** implies topless only is more skill-based, thus making it more professional. Fully nude by comparison gets positioned as unprofessional and the stigma shifts from topless only to fully nude dancing and dancers. **Carrie** neutralizes the moral taint (e.g., infidelity) associated with topless only by ‘denying injury’. It is topless only, therefore it does not jeopardize her identity as the faithful partner and *Good Girl*. The persuasiveness of the immorality associated with exotic dancing and sex work in general means in order to stabilize her position as the faithful partner she has to establish that there are far more immoral types of dancing and sex work than topless only. This creates social groups based upon the *Good Girl* versus the *Dirty Dancer*. It also reflects a form of ‘resistance’ to the negative assumptions of the sameness of sex work circulating outside organizational life. Fully nude dancers or those with fully nude experience also rationalize the type of dancing by emphasizing the insignificant difference between topless only and fully nude dancing.

This neutralizes the stigma associated with fully nude dancing. If topless only is OK, then fully nude must be as well because there is no real difference in the amount of coverage offered by the panties worn in topless only or the real exposure of the naked body given the dark lighting in fully nude dancing. Added to this, other dancers move away from focusing upon fully nude versus topless only to infuse positive value in the work they perform. Exposing the naked body, to whatever extent, should be embraced and celebrated. In this way, dancers directly challenge the stigma associated with all exotic dancing and transform it into more positive meanings. The efforts described above are motivated by professional, as well as social rules and illuminate how identity work is not always guided solely by commercial or organizational rules (Bolton, 2000a, 2000b, 2005a; Bolton and Boyd, 2003).

In creating boundaries of acceptable drinking habits at work, dancers also neutralize the stigma and *refocus* attention to non-stigmatized elements of their work. A skilled-based occupation requires the *Professional* to be on form during work and separate private-based pleasure from paid, serious work. To make this more persuasive, many dancers draw on those that do drink at work or those who do not drink in moderation as the other, that is, the unprofessional dancer.

Dancers also separate themselves from others or established private and public boundaries through *distancing*, *dividing up the social world* (Goffman, 1963; Thompson and Harred, 1992), *condemning the condemners* (Sykes and Matza, 1957; Thompson and Harred, 1992) and creating *social comparisons* (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999). Nondisclosure to

family and friends means dancers try and contain stigma associated with particular identities to certain areas of their lives, in effect dividing up their social world into stigmatized and nonstigmatized areas. This means they can enact unspoiled identities in their private lives, or certain parts of it, and maintain the self-enhancing value of the *Good Girl*. Some dancers also express disgust as a means through which to manage their own feelings and shape their identity. They *reframe* their position as dirty workers by redirecting the stigma to clients, other dancers and the industry as whole. The moral taint is transferred by condemning those (e.g., sleazy men) that often condemn dancers (as promiscuous, cheap, brainless). Social comparisons are also drawn between *Dirty Dancers* versus *Professionals* and between *Lifers* versus *Professionals* and *Opportunists*. The *Opportunist* and *Professional* are constructed to rationalize the individual's occupation and thus present dancing as a legitimate occupation. Again, this strategy is coupled with othering. The *Opportunist* and *Professional* are more likely to be interpreted as nonstigmatized or less stigmatized when there is an other from which to compare it. In this case the other is the *Dirty Dancer* or the *Lifer*.

Through processes of Fantasy dancers also neutralize stigma by 'denying injury'. The stigma of sex work as criminal, immoral and deviant is so pervasive that in neutralizing this stigma, dancers and managers shift the stigma to other clubs and other forms of sex work. In confronting both the deviance and immorality and criminality facing exotic dancing as a form of sex work, **Jim** differentiates exotic dancing from other types of sex work and in turn shifts the taint to prostitution (and associated dirty clubs). In effect, he challenges the sameness of sex emerging through the media

narratives. **Jim** discusses how illegal immigrants entering the industry taint the reputation of all dancing clubs, “dressing themselves up as dancers and...really being prostitutes and escorts...but it’s bringing something that shouldn’t be within this industry”. He also adds dancing is not grounded in reality rather it deals with “non contact fantasies...bringing in touching and all that sort of thing that’s reality, that physical, you can quantify that...whatever goes through some guy’s head while a girl’s dancing you can’t quantify that...three minutes of a dance and that’s it...back to normality”. Although there are various professional and social forces interacting here as can be seen through the *Artist/e* and the *Professional*, the organization does make a more direct effort to intervene and mediate the stigma in emphasizing the performance of a fantasy. This reduces the risk that dancers will distance themselves from the work and offer an inauthentic performance. An inauthentic performance would threaten a successful commercial transaction.

In a similar way, **Anna** confronts the discourses of criminality, public (dis)order, and deviance and immorality enveloping the industry. To do this, however, she draws on the other outside of the industry. She defuses the intensity of the stigma by comparing the work to other stigmatized activities, “at the end of the day what we’re doing isn’t wrong...like people go out there and rape people, beat their wives and stuff and all we’re doing is dancing...and then they say what we do is bad”.

Dancers also *recalibrate* the weighting of different job components so that the less stigmatized, more positive features of the work are prioritized over the more stigmatized features. The thrill of the performance, the exciting

lifestyle and the monies earned are all placed higher in a hierarchy of job components than the monotony of the job, competitive nature of the work and the rude behaviour of clients. Dancers acknowledge the less positive features of the work, but place lower value on these elements when evaluating the total value of the job. They modify meanings by directing attention to the more positive features of the job. The discourse of art and entertainment may be drawn upon in using this ‘technique’ to manage stigma.

Similarly, dancers also *refocus* upon the positive features of the work while ignoring or minimizing the stigmatized elements. Self-employment offers a viable, reasonable alternative for students to pay tuition fees without sacrificing studying time or increasing debt. Other dancers focus upon the opportunity to travel the world, discover themselves or start up their own business. If it were not for this work, these possibilities may otherwise not be available to the *Opportunist* or the *Empowered*.

The ambiguity around what constitutes sex work (e.g., different types of activities are considered sex work, different labels are used to refer to exotic dancing, different types of exotic dancing exist) (Bruckert, 2002) and the legislation governing (Jones et al., 2003) is also likely to play a role in these techniques employed by dancers. On the one hand, disparate monitoring and policy decisions made by municipalities across the country (Bindel, 2004; Jones et. al, 2003) serve as a base from which objectors can emphasize the sameness of sex work, as well as various other aspects of bad sex (e.g., criminality, immorality) to create and sustain a stigmatized position for exotic dancing. On the other hand, with no national standards there is more

room for dancers and clubs to challenge and negotiate the position of sex work beyond the boundaries of bad sex. If national standards were in place that deemed exotic dancing establishments part of the sex trade it would make it more difficult for dancers to refute the sameness of sex work.

Most dancers employ a combination of ‘techniques’ to manage the stigma associated with their work and associated identities. Through these ‘techniques’ dancers justify their work and their sense of self as dirty workers or spoiled identities. If dancing is a means to an end, it is therefore more legitimate than dancing for the sake of dancing or dancing as a long-term commitment. Dancers construct social groups and negotiate membership in these groups to establish less stigmatized identities. Group membership may be determined based upon the attributes of support, competitiveness, ambition, tenure, entrepreneurship, education, professionalism, femininity and / or dirtiness. Dancers draw upon the other (i.e., the Competitor, Dirty Dancer, Lifer) to construct themselves as the Artist/e, Celebrity, Empowered, Good Girl, Opportunist, Exploited and Professional. Overall, emotion work entails the individual managing meanings for herself, as well as for others. *In fusing emotion work, social identity and dirty work, these ‘techniques’ can be seen as manifestations of agency through which the individual engages in understanding herself and others. It also illuminates how the type of work performed plays a role in how the individual struggles with constructing positive identities among the multiplicity and contradiction she experiences.*

It is not clear the extent to which the ‘techniques’ employed by the individual and the clubs are successful in modifying meanings embedded by

various constituents (e.g., interest groups, clients, partners). The empirical work of Bruckert (2002), Funari (1997), Wesley (2002) does suggest individual's attempts to manage meanings are successful although there are varying degrees to which these efforts produce substantial structural changes. Funari's (1997) autoethnographical account of her experiences as a sex worker describes how sex work affords her a greater comfort with her own sexuality and how it also confronted certain dominant notions of femininity and masculinity (e.g., body hair is not feminine).

To be a woman with abundant body hair is to be both, blessed and cursed. The stigma attached to female hairiness needs no elaboration. The blessing is that, like any mark of stigma, it serves to reveal others as well as to shed light in the very structure of stigmatization. Never able to fit into the feminine mould and unwilling to comply with it any case, I learned to stake my identity, in part, on my deviations from it (Funari, 1997:33).

Wesley (2002) concludes from her research with a group of exotic dancers that even in situations where structural conditions of class and gender are particularly pervasive dancers constantly negotiate meanings of power with others and themselves. Bruckert (2002) also contends on one level, dancers are in a position to manipulate the gendered scripts that oppress women through profiting from customers, as well as through exploiting the commodification of sexuality. She also notes, however, these actions do little to confront stereotypes or the legitimacy of the sex hierarchy.

The discussion of the discourse of art and entertainment emerging through the popular press archives does suggest some movement in challenging the dominant bad sex discourses. Unfortunately, attempts to neutralize stigma associated with particular subgroups through othering, by both *FYEO* and

individual dancers are likely to do little to confront the gendered nature of the jobs (e.g., required bodywork and engagement rules) and the position of sex work as bad work (e.g., public, emotive, less credible). Bruckert (2002) also demonstrates the problematic nature of othering techniques employed by dancers in her research. The efforts of dancers to create a moral superiority over other workers do little to challenge stereotypes. Paradoxically, “these dancers espouse an understanding that mirrors the dominant discourse” (Bruckert, 2002:130).

It is also important to draw attention to the physical and psychological risks of managing the stigma associated with this work. In theorizing identity at work I offer a rather narrow and incomplete picture of the consequences of performing this work. The violence, abuse, stress and dissociation evident in the extant literature on exotic dancing (e.g., Ronai and Ellis, 1989; Ross, Anderson, Heber, and Norton, 1990; Wesley, 2002) is not a dominant theme that emerges through this research. This does not mean that in retelling these stories that I set out to underplay the negative and ‘real’ consequences of performing this type of work.

8.5.3. Fusing Distinct Literatures on Work-Based Identity

Jenkins (1996) draws attention to the problematic nature of drawing a distinction between social identity and self-identity in his book *Social Identity*. His focus is upon how our understanding of who we are is constituted by our relations with others, while also recognizing the self as reflexive. For Jenkins identity work is founded upon the order and predictability of the social world as depicted by social identity theory, social

categorization theory and social verification theory. He notes individual identity emphasizes difference, while collective identity emphasizes similarity. He does not, however, explore how or why individuals negotiate membership to particular groups. He interprets the process of becoming as a “to-ing and fro-ing of how the individual sees herself and how others see her” (Jenkins, 1996:52). This process can best be depicted as a continuum with each end (i.e., self-image and public image) constructing the other and representing the “internal-external dialectic of individual identification” (Jenkins, 1996:52). His work illuminates identity work as a process of coherence, as well as confusion whereby the individual plays an active role in managing her experiences. Furthermore, Jenkins sheds light on how identity is historically and culturally specific. His agenda does lean towards social identity rather than self-identity, however, he does acknowledge the reflexive element of identity, whereby the individual struggles in her identity work. In this way, his work offers potential in bridging social and self-identity in theorizing identity at work.

I argue that social identity theories do not pay enough attention to agency in the construction of an individual’s identities. Certainly some identities are constructed without deliberation or conscious effort and individual (e.g., values, beliefs), organization, societal and social resources are pervasive in this process. This, however, does not necessarily mean that this process occurs without agency. Agency can exist even when it is not reflected in actions others can see or behaviours the individual acknowledges. I struggle with accepting that all identity work is so mechanistic and mundane that the individual lacks self-awareness to engage in this process. Alvesson and Willmott (2002) recognize self-awareness as an aspect of identity formation

and regulation. They interpret identity as an “object of self-consciousness” (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002:625). They draw upon Giddens’ (1991:53) concept of “self-identity” to conceptualize identity as a reflexive narrative reconstructed through the experiences of the individual and the competing discourses circulating. Self-identity is the outcome of various conscious and unconscious elements that are temporal, coherent, yet contradictory for the individual. As new experiences are lived and alternative discourses emerge, the individual’s sense of who they are shifts. Self-identity also offers coherence in that it connects different experiences over time and reduces fragmentation in feelings. At the same time, conscious identity work is grounded in self-doubt or a desire to challenge the boundaries of the identity roles that the individual experiences. Alvesson and Willmott’s (2002) description of self-identity is useful in shedding light on how the individual is active in constructing her work-based identity. Unfortunately, however, they do very little with this in their focus upon identity regulation as a form of organizational control.

As I interpret it, in fusing emotion work, dirty work, social identity and identity regulation as a form of organizational control in understanding how the individual makes sense of her work-based identity there are several key elements to understanding identity at work. This illustrates the unique contribution of my research to organization studies and identity at work. These key elements include, *competing, interacting and intersecting resources across societal, organizational and social networks; the self as reflexive consciously or otherwise; identities as multiple, temporal and contextual; identity as retrospective, and; identity work as coherent, contradictory and dynamic*. To date, the extant literature on work-based

identity has only offered partial pictures of how identity 'happens' and the various resources involved in this process. *My research provides a more complete picture of how the individual plays an active role in her own identity work and how she draws upon various resources in this process.*

The individual is reflexive in that she recognizes there are resources that she can draw upon and these resources may shape her identity construction. In this way, relations of power among competing and interacting resources, for example, societal, organizational and social networks, are taken into account in identity construction. At the same time, the individual has an acute awareness that these boundaries are not permanent or fixed. This is where the role of agency is emphasized and demonstrates how individuals struggle with the expectations that may be constructed by society, organizations and influential individuals and groups. Here we can see how organizational life and the identities constructed in and around it are tied to broader macro resources. Furthermore, when an individual enters an organization they bring with them the experiences they have lived prior to entering the occupation and organization they do. Through these lived experiences, we can 'hear' the contradictions that an individual strives to sort through in making sense of her work-based identities. These struggles can be interpreted as the individual's attempts to shape the various resources available for her to draw upon. Coupled with this, our identities are seen to be multiple, temporal and contextual. Our sense of who we are is also retrospective in that only after we have experienced a particular identity can we reflect upon it and do otherwise. Who we, and others, think we are then consists of a complex network of narratives that entail a sense of coherence, multiplicity and contradiction. This process entails a sense of coherence in that our identities provide us with a way of 'ordering' our experiences and

those we interact with. It is also dynamic in that becoming is a state never fully realized and some aspects of it are always shifting. This research offers a unique lens through which to capture the complexity of identity at work by fusing emotion work, social identity, dirty work and identity regulation as a form of organizational control. In this way, the individual can be seen to be an active agent in how she makes sense of her work-based identity among various resources she has available to draw upon.

8.6. Sex Work, Dirty Work and Alternative Learning in Organization Studies

In Chapters One and Three I argue that organization studies' has been plagued by an insular focus, albeit often implicit, upon organizational life as an objective entity. As such, the dominant notion of organization is underpinned by rationality, logic and order, whereby emotion, sex, and process are often overlooked and neglected (Brewis and Linstead, 2000; Chia, 1999; Parker, 2002). Despite increasing attention being drawn to emotion and organizational life (cf., Bolton, 2005a; Fineman, 2000, 2003), when the subjective side, that is, emotion, sex, and individual experience, is acknowledged in organization studies, it is usually under the guise of an intruder in the workplace (e.g., sexual harassment) (Brewis, 2001). The subjective side of organizational life is an intruder who limits the organization's ability to meet specific goals, like productivity, customer satisfaction, and efficiency. Furthermore, it has long been argued that viewing 'organization' as an entity, rather than a process limits our ability to acknowledge and tease out how organizing is a historical, yet constantly shifting process of becoming (Chia, 1999; Watson and Harris, 1999). In

critiquing such a narrow depiction of organizational life, several researchers have offered a stance from which organizational life can be seen as processual, with historical, subjective and objective aspects (Chia, 1999; Weick, 1979). Integral to my research on exploring how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity is exploring what we can see ‘differently’ by looking at ‘old’ issues, that is, identity at work, in alternative, or ‘new’, sites for organization studies. *It is my view that the processual, historical, subjective and objective aspects of organizing are so raw in sex work as a form of dirty work that we can learn a great deal about identity at work and the nature of organizing and organization studies.* In doing this I also aimed to unsettle our taken for granted assumptions about what ‘legitimate’ organizing is, that is, in both research and practice. In the discussion that follows, I draw together insights discussed thus far in this research to illuminate how sex work and dirty work can surface vivid insights about identity at work, and organizational life in general, so that we, as researchers and practitioners, have no choice but to confront that which we may *choose not* to see.

As briefly discussed in this chapter, the ‘realities’ of sex work are often a far cry from the picture depicted in this research as I focus upon the agency inherent in work-based identity. The violence, abuse, exploitation, health and safety issues and emotional drain that many sex workers confront on a daily basis make it hard to re-direct attention from such concerns to issues of identity as I have done in this research. While many of these harsh ‘realities’ did not emerge through the stories told to me it does not mean they are not there, nor does it mean that these stories are reflective of the industry as a whole. In my attempts to draw attention to the sharpness of the

subjective and historical aspects of organizational life, as well as to the complexities inherent in work-based identity, I risk underplaying the seriousness of other concerns that sex workers and various other dirty workers face. The most I can do to counter such criticisms is to acknowledge that these issues have been a constant concern of mine throughout the research process, however, my storyline has been to focus upon what I felt was my contribution to organization studies and our understandings of work-based identity. In taking any research route, we often close off others along the way. In talking about sex work in organization studies, I hope that we begin to acknowledge how we marginalize certain types of work and those performing it, without normalizing it. I also hope that in drawing attention to the industry we begin to see what can or might be done differently in such marginalized occupations.

In many ways, however, the work as performed at *FYEO* by the individuals encountered through this research does mirror other forms of organizing. In many ways, the organization of labour within *FYEO* is similar to the simple structure of small and medium sized organizations, whereby there is a relatively flat organizational structure with few management positions. There is little opportunity or desire for promotion in the traditional sense of a career ladder as indicated by **Jim** who notes that most dancers move on to other types of work or set up their own dancing establishments, rather than moving up management ranks within *FYEO*. With management salaries comparatively lower than dancers' earnings there is little incentive to move up the hierarchy within the structure. The nature of the employment contract is comparable to that evident in sales positions whereby earnings are a

function of commission based pay only. If you make a sale, then you make money, otherwise not. With little employment protection, like other non-unionized employees, dancers have little say in how much house fees they are charged and how clients treat them. As mentioned in Chapter Five, however, the efforts of one of Britain's largest unions, the GMB has opened up opportunities for exotic dancers and other sex workers to unionise in an effort to improve workplace conditions. This has to date not been an issue at *FYEO*. Furthermore, the house rules that outline appropriate attire and behaviour for dancers are not all that different from job descriptions outlining duties and responsibilities in other types of work. Undoubtedly, the language used is far more sexual and vivid, however, again I argue this draws attention to what is open and explicit in exotic dancing is often evident, but unspoken in other types of work. Various other aspects of the job are governed by informal rules like the recruitment, selection and socialization processes. However, there are plenty of workplaces that operate on an informal basis in how they hire, fire and socialize employees. Like others before, I contend that the structure of the organization and work, as well as the formal and informal rules governing the work position exotic dancing, at least from this research, in many ways are a mirrored image of 'normal' organizational life, that which is objective driven by rational profit seeking goals. *My research makes a contribution by highlighting the subjective, objective and historical of organizing, much of which is overlooked in organization studies' research. Furthermore, unlike much of the extant literature to date, in looking at sex work as a site for organization studies it surfaces the intersections between stigma, identity and work to such an extent that it forces us to confront the messy and complex nature of work-based identity construction.* The intersections and interactions

between the individual and various resources of identity construction are so vivid that we can begin to 'see' just how problematic the process of becoming is for the individual.

8.6.1. Organizing as Subjective, Historical, Processual and Objective

Viewing organization as objective, stable, and efficiency-driven entities implies that there is little space for emotion, 'sex', or individual experience in organizational life (Brewis and Linstead, 2000; Hearn and Parkin, 1987; Parker, 2002). Emotion, sex and individual experience and organizations do not mix, as this would affect the organization's ability to be rational and efficient. In turn, such subjective considerations are reserved for private life, while rationality is reserved for 'professional' life (Hearn and Parkin, 1987). This is not to say that I am the first to offer a critique of the narrow depiction of organization studies and organizational life. Brewis and Linstead (2000), Burrell (1984), Burrell and Hearn (1989), Hearn and Parkin (1983; 1987), Hearn, Sheppard, Tancred-Sheriff and Burrell (1989) have all argued that sex and organization are inseparable and that organizations construct and are constructed by sex. Furthermore, as discussed earlier, more and more attention is being drawn to understanding 'emotion' in organizational life. There are a plethora of views on what emotion is, what 'it' looks like and how we study it (Bolton, 2005a; Fineman, 2000; Hochschild, 1983). While 'emotion work' is key to the alternative theoretical lens offered in this research, my intent is not to engage in a discussion around 'emotion'. My aim is to acknowledge that in studying emotion in organization studies we begin to embrace the subjective

elements inherent in organizational life. As Fineman (2000:1) puts it in his book, *Emotion in Organizations*,

As emotional arenas, organizations bond and divide their members. Workaday frustrations and passions – boredom, envy, fear, love, anger, guilt, infatuation, embarrassment, nostalgia, anxiety – are deeply woven into the way roles are enacted and learned, power is exercised, trust is held, commitment formed and decisions made. Emotions are not simply excisable from these, and many other, organizational processes; they both characterize and inform them.

Moreover, organizations are ‘made up’ of individuals who engage in constant interaction. As such, organizations are constantly reshaped by conscious human activity, whereby individual experience guides daily organizational life. The interactions that construct organizational life are tied to a complex network of various systems including cultural, political and social considerations that are both historically embedded, as well as constantly shifting. In this way, organizing can be seen to be both bound by history and enabled by individual experience and interaction. Interestingly, however, despite the critiques and new avenues of research within organization studies, the dominant notion of organizing as objective and rational prevails (Brewis and Linstead, 2000; Parker, 2002).

Part of my agenda with this research was to unsettle our comfort zones in what we accept as legitimate forms of organizing as organizational studies’ researchers and embrace the objective, as well as historical and subjective aspects of organizational life. As I see it, it is nearly impossible to deny the ‘sex’ and emotion that is integral to sex work, yet many of the activities associated with the sex industry are governed by various formal and

informal processes alike 'other' forms of organizing. At the same time, the performance of identity as described in the processes of identity construction in Chapter Six take on a parody-like depiction of what sex and emotion 'look' like in and around organizational life. But how are the impression management techniques employed by dancers all that different from the efforts required for other service-based work? Ashforth and Humphrey (1993), Ashforth and Kreiner (1999), Hearn and Parkin (1987) and Hochschild (1983) all draw parallels between the work performed by sex workers and the work performed in other types of work. I am not refuting the 'real' consequences that many individuals face as sex workers. The marginalized position that sex work holds historically, as argued by Burrell (1987), Hollway (1991), Rubin (1993), Brewis and Linstead (2000) and as emerges through the archival analysis and stories of dancers and managers in this research, illuminates how organizations indeed have a past that plays a role in how the organization becomes a resource for the individual in her work-based identity construction. At the same time, however, as posited by Chia (1996) and Watson and Harris (1999) organizations are also in a constant state of becoming whereby change is a constant. *Overall then, what I argue in this research is that in talking about sex work as a site of study for organization studies we have little choice but to confront the subjective and historical aspects of organizing that which we continue to overlook and underplay. I argue that part of my contribution stems from the sharpness of these issues that emerge from looking at sex work that makes us look closer at how sex work and other forms of organizing are both the same and different.*

8.6.2. The Complexities of Work-Based Identity Emerging Through the Intersections Between Stigma, Identity and Work

Ashforth and Kreiner (1999:413) contend that studying how “dirty workers attempt to resolve the identity puzzle has much to teach organizational scholars about the negotiation of meaning in the workplace”. While I am not interested in ‘resolving’ work-based identity, I do agree with Ashforth and Kreiner that given the marginalized place of dirty work(ers) the complexities of identity work surface as vibrant and raw considerations in understanding work-based identity. The individual’s struggles in balancing her desire for coherence with the contradictions and stigma encountered in her identity work are impossible to overlook. The intersections between stigma, identity and work illuminate *how* meanings about who we think we and others are, are constructed in and around organizational life.

Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) argue what is seen to be ‘dirty’ is a social construction with historical roots tied to cultural, religious and political ideologies. Individuals who perform dirty work are evaluated on the subjective basis of purity and cleanliness. This subjective evaluation results in stigma being attached to the particular jobs and in turn those working in those occupations. Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) draw upon occupational prestige as a composite of status, power, quality of work, education and income to depict the wide scope and variety of dirty work occupations. Depending upon the occupational prestige of the work, the more daunting it becomes for individuals to find a sense of coherence in who they think they, and others, are in and around work. Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) also draw attention to the problematic nature of how socialization experiences prior to

entering the occupation also becomes a resource that individuals draw upon in their work-based identity, making the boundaries between personal and public lives blurred. While Ashforth and Kreiner's (1999) work focuses upon social identity and how subcultures play a role in how meanings are negotiated in 'managing' spoiled identities, their insights illuminate similar complexities that emerge through this research in understanding how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity. The key difference, however, is that *my research makes a contribution by looking at the subjective individual and how relations with others serve as a resource for individual identity construction, rather than focusing only upon relations with others while overlooking other aspects integral to work-based identity. Furthermore, I look deeper at understanding how exotic dancing is stigmatized and how dancers both challenge and sustain their spoiled identities.*

Here again, I argue that *how* the 'sex worker' as 'dirty worker' makes sense of her work-based identity as she draws upon various intersecting and interacting resources is a complex and messy process marked by both coherence and contradiction. The struggles of identity work, however, are not isolated to this specific type of work. A hierarchy of paid work is constantly shifting and undoubtedly individual experiences of identity work are unique. As Thompson and Harred (1992) contend, however, most of us make judgements about others based upon preconceived notions about particular occupations because our occupation is one of the most important elements of how we come to understand ourselves and others. As such, if identity work is a complex and messy process in one occupation whereby the individual struggles to balance her desire for coherence with

contradictions as she draws upon various resources available to her, it is likely to be so in other occupations. The insights offered through this research are unique to the individuals encountered, while also beckoning us to look a little closer at how we see, study and do identity at work research in organization studies. *My research offers a contribution empirically in understanding the intersections between work, identity and stigma beyond the work of Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) and Thompson and Harred (1992). Moreover, it illuminates the agency inherent in identity work amidst various competing resources of identity construction.*

8.6.3. Identity Research as an Identity Project for the Researcher

To start, or perhaps more accurately, finish, my story of identity at work through an alternative theoretical lens and research site it is important to reflect on research as a subjective experience. The research experience as a living co-production by researcher and ‘participants’ has been discussed previously in this chapter in describing how this research complements existing literature on work-based identity. This point needs further discussion here under alternative learning in organization studies. It is my view that all research ventures that we engage in as organization studies researchers are identity projects, for both the researcher and those we encounter on these journeys. My views expressed in the paragraphs that follow are just that, my lived experiences that have surfaced through this research. My voice is not meant to serve as an authority nor is it meant to take away the voice of others, although this is likely to be the result given it is my hand and thoughts that write themselves on the paper. Nevertheless, something can be taken from my learning, that is, about research as an

identity project that can be transferred to organization studies' research more broadly.

Some of us choose, consciously or otherwise, to stay within our comfort zones and research topics that align well with our broader lived experiences. Perhaps unfairly targeting those that align more closely to a positivist line of thinking, I might say that if we have been 'trained' to look for universals and seek out order in the objective world surrounding us, then this may be integral to how we come to make sense of who we, and others, are. As such, we may posit research questions that seek to find 'the answer' to work-based identity. Searching for such an answer aligns with the order and stability inherent in how we understand the world and our place in it. This I might argue is reflective of our desire for coherence in our identity construction. In saying this, I am not implying that such a research path is necessarily easier or of less value than taking another research path. Nevertheless, as subjective individuals our experiences, and how we come to understand ourselves and others, play a role in what we see, do and understand as researchers, whether or not we explicitly 'write' ourselves into our research.

As I research identity at work and reflect upon my own struggles with private and public boundaries as an 'academic' and all the other identities that intersect with this role, I offer that who we are informs what we see and how we study it. For example, am I a 'professor' first and foremost? Why do I try and separate myself from what I do as a paid work? How do others see me because of my work? Undoubtedly, my own struggles make some

stories more salient than others as I listen (or read) the stories of those I encounter along the way.

Furthermore, in this to-ing and fro-ing (Jenkins, 1996) process of developing a research 'agenda' (inappropriately assuming we all have such an agenda) the resources available to us through our organization, our relations with others and broader macro considerations shape us as we go along. As organization studies' researchers we may, or may not, have the opportunity to 'talk' about ourselves as 'academics' as the dancers in this research have talked about their work. *In adopting the view of agency that I have for this research, I would contend then that much of our retrospective sense making as 'academics' about who we, and others, are gets overlooked and underplayed in how we re-present our research to students, academics, practitioners, family, and journal editors and reviewers.* Sure, we are encouraged to talk about how we have 'managed' the biases in our research, but we are not often encouraged to think and talk about how our research is a part of our own process of becoming. As organization studies researchers we need to embrace our own experiences in how we come to understand ourselves and others throughout our research.

In exploring how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity for a group of exotic dancers I chose to unsettle my own comfort zones about what work looks like to me, what it involves and how our own work-based identities are an unspoken voice in understanding identity at work in organization studies. In looking at an alternative site of study in organization studies, what some would consider quite extreme especially for an academic in a North American business school context, it has challenged

who I think I am, who I think others are, and how I think identity construction ‘happens’. I now think twice about the case study examples I use in class to make sure I am presenting a diverse view of what organizational life looks like, how I refer to organizing versus organization, how I privilege certain types of work over others, and how I use ‘othering’ techniques to justify my work and how I understand myself and others. By writing ourselves into our research we begin to embrace how identity at work and how we study it cannot, and need not, be separated from our own identity projects. *Part of my contribution is embracing my own experiences in understanding how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity.*

In the next chapter I reflect in more detail upon the research process and my own struggles in researching an alternative site of study. I hope, however, here in this chapter that acknowledging how studying identity at work is in itself very much an ongoing achievement of identity for the researcher that we, as organization studies’ researchers, begin to embrace the complexities involved in how work-based identity ‘happens’ and how the stories of identity construction get re-told.

8.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter has theorized how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity by reconciling emotion work, dirty work, social identity and identity regulation as a form of organization control. To do this, I discussed how my research complements the existing literature on emotional labour and ‘doing gender’, as well as the nature of identity and

how the researcher's lived experiences are integral to understanding identity at work. Following this, I theorized how the alternative lens for understanding identity at work offered through this research illuminates how we can come to embrace the agency involved in identity work, as well as the various intersecting and interacting (re)sources the individual can draw upon. This is the key contribution that I offer others studying work-based identity so as to develop a more complete picture of how identity 'happens'. In theorizing identity at work I also discussed how looking to sex work and dirty work as a site of study for organization studies can be seen as a site of alternative learning. In this way, part of my contribution stems from the sharpness of the issues that surface through this research. By exploring sex work and dirty work, that is, emotion, sex, individual experience, history, complexity, we have little choice, but to look a little closer at how we understand identity at work more broadly in organization studies and how we come to see certain types of work as more legitimate than others. In the last chapter of this research, I reflect upon my experiences and the research process to offer the reader an ending to this story of theorizing identity at work.

Chapter Nine

Research Reflections

9. Introduction

Throughout this research I have argued that this story of understanding how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity has been underpinned by *experience*, that of ‘participants’ and of my own. In Chapter One I told my story of how my own identity struggles informed the focus upon identity at work for this research. Throughout the research I have made efforts to embrace my own voice and my own interpretations in co-constructing the stories that emerge through this work. In Chapter Eight I began to reflect upon how identity at work research can be seen as an identity project for the researcher(s) involved. In this concluding chapter I set out to establish the trustworthiness of my research and address criticisms of relativism through a discussion of the credibility, transferability, epistemic reflexivity and methodological reflexivity that has been integral to this work. Epistemic reflexivity is highlighted as I reflect upon my personal journey and how I, as the researcher, have been in many ways ‘the researched’ in this project. Furthermore, in reflecting upon lessons I have learned along the way I discuss how work published throughout this process has allowed me to establish credibility, transferability and methodological reflexivity in this research. Moreover, methodological reflexivity is discussed in more detail as I reflect upon methodological choices made throughout the research process and point to areas for future research in understanding identity at work in organization studies.

9.1. The Researcher as Researched

In Chapter Four I draw upon Johnson and Duberley's (2003) discussion of epistemic reflexivity as a process whereby the researcher engages with her own social location and how that affects the form and outcomes of the research. It is described as a participatory approach that aligns well with a subjectivist epistemology. In this section I do not intend to repeat how I have struggled with my own work-based identities as discussed in Chapter One. What I want to do here is surface how this research has become in many ways my own identity project marked by new struggles about who I am, in and outside organizational life. In making my journey as transparent as possible it illuminates my social constructivist paradigm employed throughout this research and increases the trustworthiness of the research for those reading it.

This research has been challenging from start to finish in how I make sense of who I am. As a 'trained' functionalist brought through North American undergraduate and graduate business programmes as both student and educator, I have become very aware of the marginalized place that 'qualitative' and 'critical' research holds in this system. Despite my attempts to let go of the desire for order and scientific rigour, this grounding never really completely leaves me. Throughout this research process my supervisor has often reminded me that my positivist roots emerge from time to time in my tendency to draw upon numerics to 'order' and organize my thoughts and persuade my audiences. As strongly as I now believe the subjective individual is in understanding the world we construct, I still struggle with finding a comfortable place for my voices in my research. My

belief is that we are all nothing but contradictions in who we think we and others are, however, at the same time I constantly struggle with who I am 'supposed' to be, in and outside of organizational life and how the boundaries between private and public lives blur. I also often reflect upon my motivations for choosing to make my academic life more difficult, as I perceive and live it, than necessary by exploring 'alternative' sites of study, choosing 'alternative' research questions and employing qualitative methodologies and methods. In doing this, I limit where I can publish and even work, yet I continue down the road less travelled where through my research I uncover, unsettle and discover many new insights in my own processes of becoming.

In exploring sex work as a site of study in organization studies this research has become very much my own identity project. Questions of my professional identity, researcher identity, gender identity and national identity have plagued me throughout this process. When I started this research I was working in Canada, during the 'data' collection processes I was working in the UK, and presently I am working again in Canada while I finish the research remotely through a UK institution. My professional identity as an academic is tied to various roles that I draw upon in making sense of who I am. I have always been sensitive to being recognized and talked about 'outside' of work. I struggle with balancing my fear of being 'caught' acting 'unprofessionally' by colleagues or students and my desire for individuality and 'freedom' from occupationally defined rules. During this research process I have had to confront this struggle over and over. Given what I perceive to be the 'alternative' nature of sex work as a site of study in mainstream business school research agendas, I have often

neglected or underplayed the sex work aspect of my research when asked about my topic of study. This meant that while I was collecting 'data' in Newcastle at *FYEO* I was constantly anxious about colleagues of mine showing up at *FYEO*. My concern was with making them uncomfortable in being seen there, as well as them wondering about my motives for being there. Furthermore, I also always wondered if any of my students saw me at the clubs. This was slightly more alarming for me because of the sheer number of students I taught I would never recognize many of them anyway and I struggled with what would be said about me as their 'professor' because of my presence in the clubs. I was driven to continue with the 'data' collection despite these struggles because of my concern for 'rigour'. This sense of rigour stems from my functionalist background, that is, more 'data' is better. This process forced me to face some of my insecurities about defining myself on my own terms and in turn has allowed me to develop a greater sense of comfort with my individuality in my identity roles as an academic, as well as in other identity roles. Since that time, I have used a case that I have written about *FYEO* in an organizational theory class taught at the institution that presently employs me. I intend to discuss this in more detail in the next section, however, writing and using the case has provided me with an opportunity to be more 'open' about who I am as a researcher and educator, as well as gather feedback from a broad audience about the suitability of the topic to business education.

I also struggled with how I presented myself to those individuals I encountered along the way in the research. I wanted to acquire the trust of the dancers as a researcher, but I did not want to intimidate them in this process. I worked hard on my own impression management techniques.

Every night I gave great consideration to what I should wear to the clubs. I wanted to look like I fit into the context of a nightclub, but also to portray the 'informality' of a student and the 'professionalism' of a researcher. All of these images are for me underpinned by various life experiences I have encountered along the way. I often downplayed that I was presently employed as a member of staff at a local university. I emphasized my role as a PhD student because my past experiences had been that individuals and organizations were always more receptive, and perhaps less threatened by a student, rather than a 'professional'. In many ways, I took the role of the unaware student digging for information about a new subject area. This allowed me space to ask questions that otherwise may have seemed misaligned with the 'knowing' academic, or at least my perception of an academic. Furthermore, in other areas of my life I am also sensitive to revealing my occupation for concern that people will think I am pretentious and elitist, and these experiences have likely played a role in how I presented myself to those individuals I encountered.

Living, working and studying as a Canadian in the UK has also made me aware of how we can be labelled and treated differently simply because of how we sound. As an undergraduate living in the Netherlands many years ago I experienced how North Americans, in particular Americans, were in many ways stigmatized as loud, demanding, difficult, and pretentious. This became far more evident to me when I moved to the UK to work in 2002. It was not as much as what was said when you spoke, but how individuals' responded. More often than not, the assumption was that you were American. This on its own was never a big concern for me. It was the tone of the comments that often followed that made me very sensitive to how my

national identity played a role in who I was and how others perceived who I was. I became quick to emphasize I was Canadian and often employed my own 'othering' techniques to set myself apart from the US. As a result of these experiences, I had a tendency to immediately inform dancers that I was Canadian to try and minimize what I thought might be uneasiness in talking to an unwanted 'foreigner'.

Coupled with my struggles of professional identity, my struggles with who I am as a 'woman' and my comfort with my own sexuality and physical presence were the greatest challenges I confronted throughout this research. As a heterosexual 'female' I have often wondered how others, that is, dancers, customers and colleagues, perceive my sexuality because of the nature of the research I do. Overall, I would consider myself as someone comfortable in my 'own skin', in regards to how I look, my sexuality, and the sexuality of others. My experiences with the pole dancing course were particular interesting, yet challenging in confronting stereotypes I had about the work performed, as well as my level of comfort in this type of surrounding. Researching sex work has allowed me to construct a greater comfort with who I am physically and sexually. It has also meant, however, struggling with how I view 'intimate' relations and how I live out different expectations for 'men' and 'women' in everyday life. Every day I balance my feelings of the 'innocence' of men visiting exotic dancing clubs with the infidelity I sometimes associate with the experience and the exploitation that dancers encounter in this industry. I too struggle with not having clear answers about what we do to 'fix' this industry and if indeed it needs to be 'fixed'. These struggles have undoubtedly played a role in the types of questions I asked throughout this process. For example, upon reflection I

always saw female customers in the clubs, yet dancers always referred to clients as males. Never during the process did I really push this to explore the ‘realness’ of the heterosexuality that dancers implied and that I felt.

In writing myself in as a subjective individual my lived experiences before and during this research have played out in this project. It has meant in many ways I am more confused about who I am, as an academic and otherwise than before I started. However, what it has allowed me to do is become a little more comfortable with the contradictions I confront in my own identity work. Furthermore, it enhances our understanding of identity at work as a process of becoming that is a messy and challenging experience plagued by ambiguity, contradictions and temporary coherence.

9.2. Lessons Learned Along the Way

Crystallization facilitated my ability to access a diverse range of perceptions and considerations about how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity (Richardson, 2000). Through semi-structured interviews, participant-observation, diary notes and archival material I feel I have been able to offer the reader an in depth retelling of the stories I have interpreted throughout this process. The verbatim anecdotes, newspaper clips and diary notes used in the thesis serve to increase the reader’s confidence or sense of credibility (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) in my retelling of the stories heard (or read) in this research. Undoubtedly, my experience cannot be separated from the presentation of the material in this research, however, the processes through which I arrived at the interpretations I did should be transparent. Coupled with this, the detailed descriptions discussed

in this research provide the reader with ample material to determine the transferability of the alternative lens for understanding identity at work as proposed to other organizations. My discussion on the suitability of sex work as a site of research in organization studies in Chapters One, Two and Three, as well as the insights on alternative learning provided in Chapter Eight serve to increase the trustworthiness of the research and its transferability to other research sites and questions of identity at work.

I have also had the opportunity to write, present and reflect upon various elements of this research as I moved through the process of completion. In 2004 I was awarded a finalist award for a case study prepared for the Academy of Management Dark Side Case Competition. The case focused upon power relations in and around organizational life at *FYEO*. This entailed developing an extensive case study, as well as detailed teaching note. A version of this case later appeared in Mills, Simmons, and Helms Mills' (2005) *Reading Organization Theory*. In the autumn semester of my teaching in 2004, I also used the case as the basis for student term papers in an Organizational Theory class. In many ways, this was perhaps a radical move given it was my first semester teaching at this institution and I had no established credibility with the students. Furthermore, these students would have had very limited exposure to critical perspectives in understanding organizational life. In addition, the case examples experienced up to that point in time in their business programme would have been very mainstream. The students could choose the organizational theory issues they wanted to focus upon in making sense of the case, however, in class discussions and group consultation sessions meant we all had to 'talk' about sex and organization studies as a part of in-class and outside class

interactions. This process was useful for me (and the students) in thinking through the transferability of the research to other organization sites more commonly talked about in other business courses. Overall, in talking about sex in organization studies I hope we all learned to think about the sameness and difference of sex work and other forms of work.

I also wrote and presented two conference papers on different aspects of the research, one in 2004 and another in 2005. The first paper, *The Multi-dimensionality of Career Development for Self-employed Exotic Dancers*, was presented at the Careers Stream of European Conference on Organization Studies (EGOS) in 2004. While this is not the specific focus of this research, this paper surfaced the temporality enveloping the work, as well as the multi-dimensionality of factors that played a role in how dancers understood themselves and their work. Furthermore, during the presentation of the paper one audience member asked me a very significant question, “what can this tell us about other organizational sites?”. In responding to this question, I realized that I needed to find ways to illuminate the intersections between this research and other organization studies’ research. The second paper, *Managing a Spoiled Identity: Emotion Work and Dirty Workers*, was presented at the Administrative Sciences Association of Canada (ASAC) in May 2005. This paper focused specifically upon issues of identity and began to fuse emotion work, social identity, identity regulation as a form of organizational control and dirty work as an alternative lens for understanding work-based identity. The paper concentrated upon ‘othering’ as a form of emotion work exploring the struggles involved in ‘managing’ stigmatized work-based identities. This paper more clearly begins to surface the contradictions, temporality and

desire for coherence that occur in how individual make sense of who they, and others, are. This paper received the Best Student Paper Award in the Gender and Diversity Stream of the conference. The award and the discussion that followed my presentation provided me with increased confidence that the issues raised in the research were relevant and informative for organization studies more broadly.

Overall, through crystallization and various public opportunities to discuss the research in different capacities I offer a story of work-based identity that has been built up and torn a part several times. In doing this, the trustworthiness of the research is illuminated and offers readers ‘credible’ and ‘transferable’ insights for understanding work-based identity in organization studies.

9.3. Reflections on Methodology

In this section I reflect upon the methodology and methods employed throughout this research, as well as suggest future areas of research that build upon the insights offered on how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity. I have reflected upon several areas in my engagement with methodological reflexivity, including, the how, what, who, when, and where of ‘data’ collection.

As I reflect upon the research approach I would like to have had a more ethnographic experience in the cultural setting to increase the trustworthiness of the material I collected. The material collected from formal interviews was indeed insightful. However, I am not sure that the

diversity of voices and experiences always surfaced from the brief encounters I had with many of the individuals encountered. This became clear to me from the follow-up unstructured conversations I had with some of the dancers after the formal interview. Views change and different voices emerge in these conversations. I do not think most of the individuals would have agreed to talk with me outside of working hours as follow-up contact because many dancers were not interested in further communication in the clubs after the formal interview. Some individuals, however, were more willing to converse and this was evident through their eagerness to converse with me informally at later times at the clubs. Individuals were not asked to meet with me formally on more than one occasion, however, had even a few of these individuals agreed to do this, I would have gathered a deeper appreciation of their voices and experienced a more ethnographic account. I have also considered if seeking employment in the club would have allowed me to experience a deeper appreciation for the different voices. Unless I decided to dance, I do not think working in support, administration or management would have given me a greater appreciation of the experiences of dancers. It may, however, have given me a greater understanding of the club itself. As a paid employee, however, I may have struggled with how I re-presented the voices of dancers if I expected these findings to have a negative impact upon the management of the club.

In addition, the material collected for this research primarily concentrated upon information offered by dancers, although this was supplemented with interviews with three managers, the managing director and owner. Neither of the clubs employed a house mother at the time, however, I think it would have been interesting to explore the views of an individual working in this

position. The job required the person to serve as a voice for dancers, as well as for management. Balancing these responsibilities may be at odds with each other and interviews might have presented different experiences than either management or dancers could offer. Coupled with this, all managers interviewed were male. There were no female managers in the Newcastle club, however, there was one in the London club I visited. I would have liked the opportunity to interview this manager to see if her experiences were similar or different to the other managers I encountered. Moreover, stories of customers might also add another dimension to understanding the identity work of dancers in this context. Weitzer (2000) has argued that we need more research on the individuals and the organizations sex workers are employed with, rather than customers. Accounts of how customers perceive the processes of identity at work for workers, however, might serve to highlight another aspect of relations with others not covered through my research.

As noted in an earlier chapter, most interviews were conducted on nights when **Terry** was working. I have since wondered if this would have affected the stories that dancers described during the interviews conducted on these nights. If I felt more comfortable coming to the club and dealing with **Terry**, I wonder if dancers also felt more comfortable working on nights that he was working. This was something I felt was too obtrusive to ask dancers, although some of them did indicate that they had real concerns with the management style of some of the managers working at the club. Again, if I could have secured contact time outside of working hours some of these issues might have been explored without posing a threat to the job security of those involved. Coupled with the timing of interviews and

observation, most of the interviews and observation occurred at the Newcastle club. I do think some of the experiences of those dancers working in London were different than those in Newcastle. Dancers and managers in London discussed how the industry was far more competitive than in other areas of England. When competitors introduced fully nude dancing, *FYEO* felt they had no choice to do so as well in order to remain competitive. As a result, the workforce changed (e.g., some dancers left the industry) and it offered opportunities for dancers to make more money (e.g. fully nude dances are £20 and topless only are £10). There also appeared to be differences in how dancers who worked fully nude in London felt about the nature of their work and those that danced topless only in Newcastle (e.g., many of those who had only danced topless only felt they would not dance at a fully nude establishment). More exposure to London clubs might have produced more detailed accounts of these experiences.

9.4. Where to From Here?

Building upon the insights offered through this research and the reflections discussed in this chapter, I conclude my story on how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity with some reflections on where do we go from here with identity at work? The trustworthiness of the findings presented through this research and the contribution to theory offered on identity at work can be assessed in numerous ways.

To delve deeper into the private - public boundaries between identity at work and the individual as active in her identity work, it would prove fruitful to engage in methodological approaches that employ life histories

and biographies. This would require that individuals be willing to spend extensive periods of time with the researcher to describe and recount their experiences, inside and outside of organizational life. In turn, this would permit greater access to understanding the emotion work of the subjective individual through exploring public and private voices and the overlap and contradictions that might exist in constructing identities at work. Encouraging participants to reflect upon their interview transcripts and commenting on this would also offer the opportunity to explore the individual's potential to enact a critical consciousness in identity construction. The complexities of constructing identity at work could also be teased out through the deconstruction of individuals' stories. Deconstructing the text produced from interviews would offer another lens from which to explore identity as a system of interacting forces. It would also more easily permit the multiplicity and contradictory nature of identity to surface in analyzing data.

The intersections between organizational identity and individual identity could also be explored more deeply. This would assess the intensity with which the organization is a resource the individual draws upon in her identity work, as suggested by Alvesson and Willmott (2002) and discussed in this research. Scott and Lane (2000) have suggested that organizational identity is constructed according to the interests of, and feedback of various actors. One group of key actors is the managers working in these organizations. As agents of the organization the pervasiveness of the organizational control may be more apparent. As a result, the emotion work performed by these individuals may be even more intense and complex. Linstead and Thomas (2002), Thomas and Linstead (2002) and Watson and

Harris (1999) have all explored identity work of managers as a process characterized by paradox, fluidity, inconsistency and emergence. This work integrates well with some of the considerations proposed by viewing the individual as subjective in her identity work.

Exploring the intersections between stigma, identity and work enhances our understanding of the particularities of organizational life for dirty workers. Organization studies has neglected these workplaces (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999; Brewis and Linstead, 2002) and the individuals employed in them and there is much that can be learned by extending this type of research to other types of dirty work. Comparative studies across dirty work occupations would provide insight into the role of occupational prestige. Furthermore, as suggested in this research othering is likely to occur across dirty work occupations. In this case exotic dancers draw on the other (other forms of sex work) to place themselves in a more favourable position. These efforts, however, are likely to have little impact on unsettling truths of sex work as bad sex and bad work. As a result, sex work remains dirty work and 'we' continue to hold it in the position of the other. Looking deeper at if and how othering occurs across a variety of dirty work occupations will facilitate a greater understanding of how certain types of work become dirty and how these occupations and those performing the work negotiate the stigmatized position over time. It will also provide insight into how the organization, as a resource in individual identity construction, is the same and different across organizations.

The discussions offered in this research are easily transferred to other service-based work as well, dirty or otherwise. As noted in Chapter Two,

Ashforth and Humphrey (1993), to a certain extent, reconcile emotional labour, identity and service-based work. In organizations where the encounter is dependent upon the behaviour of the service agent, there is a greater incentive for the organization to intervene in the identity regulation of the individual to ensure a successful transaction. As such, exploring the potential for the individual to play an active role in her identity construction in these occupations seems fitting.

Furthermore, the trustworthiness of the proposed theory on identity at work here could further be assessed through comparative studies across stigmatized and non-stigmatized occupations. Do individuals performing non-stigmatized work engage in othering techniques and other forms of emotion management? Why and in what ways? My mother is employed as a nurse and I always love to hear her recount a story about how my grandmother tried to dissuade my mother from pursuing a career in nursing and become a teacher instead. At the time, and likely still today, in rural communities teaching was seen to be an honourable profession and this respect was transferred to those performing the work. My grandmother insisted, although to no avail, that my mother pursue a clean job like teaching, rather than nursing. For my grandmother, nursing was indeed valuable, but nevertheless dirty work. An interesting comparative study would be to explore the process of becoming for educators (e.g., teachers, professors) and health providers (e.g., nurses, doctors) and the connections between these groupings (e.g., university faculty teaching in nursing programs or medical school). Localized accounts would also offer the opportunity to study the specific macro resources (e.g., community / regional / national based) that are drawn upon in how the individual makes

sense of her identity at work. For example, in areas where population is less dense is the divide between private and public identity more difficult to construct, negotiate and manage?

Finally, the stigmatized position of dirty work presents organizing as historically and culturally specific. In stigmatized work there is little choice, but to acknowledge that organizations exist as more than objective entities. Furthermore, in managing this stigma the subjective aspect inherent in relations between actors and the various resources they draw upon is vivid. The historical and subjective aspects of organizing are so sharp within dirty work that it directly confronts our comfort zones of the boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate organizing and organization studies. Undoubtedly, there are workplace issues specific to exotic dancing and sex work more generally that should not be marginalized in transferring the insights from this work to other organizational sites. Yet, in many ways sex work mirrors mainstream organizational life. Formalization and specialization are integral to both types of work. Furthermore, the glass ceiling that imparts its mark on many mainstream occupations also emerges in the stories recounted by these individuals. In exotic dancing, sex is presented as a parody of heterosexuality. This parody can also be mirrored to organizational life more generally. Organizational life as objective, asexual and non-emotive is a parody of sorts. Organizational life is a performance where difference is marginalized and the mundane is not really so sterile as it appears at the surface. If we are to look a little closer at the parody we enact in mainstream organization studies, we may begin to challenge what we accept as the 'truths' of legitimate organizing. In turn, we may begin to move away from othering sex work, dirty work in general

and other alternative sites of study, in our attempts to secure a more favourable place for mainstream organizational life, studies and ourselves.

9.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter has drawn a close upon my story of work-based identity. It has focused upon my experiences in studying how the subjective individual makes sense of her work-based identity. To do this, I have engaged in epistemic reflexivity and toyed with how in studying work-based identity, this research has become part of my own process of becoming. Furthermore, in establishing the trustworthiness of this research I have engaged in methodological reflexivity, as well as illuminated how I have developed 'credibility' in the research process through crystallization and publishing material throughout the journey. In this chapter I also reflect upon the transferability of this research to other sites of study and suggest fruitful future research explorations to build upon the insights offered through my research.

Overall, my research contributes to our understanding of work-based identity by focusing upon *experience*, that is, the subjective individual and the *how* of identity work. Furthermore, in fusing distinct streams of literature, that is, emotion work, dirty work, social identity and identity regulation as a form of organizational control, the agency, as well as the various interacting and intervening resources of identity construction that the individual might draw upon in her identity work are illuminated. In addition to this, the conceptualization of agency as that which we can see and hear as proposed in this thesis moves us towards capturing a more

complete picture of identity at work. Moreover, advocating alternative learning in organization studies through studying 'alternative' organizations, this research surfaces the similarities and differences between sex work and other forms of work.

Appendix I

Interview Guide

1. Tell me how (why & when) you decided to become a dancer?
2. Is this a typical process for those getting into dancing?
3. Tell me about when you first became a dancer? What did that involve?
4. How do you feel about the experience?
5. Have you always worked here (present establishment? Newcastle?)?
6. How did working here first compare to other places where you have worked (when started)?
7. How does working here now compare to other places you have worked?
8. Is this your sole source of employment?
9. When someone starts new here what happens to that person? (how long, who's involved, does everyone go through the same process)
10. If someone has danced before is the experience they go through the same as someone who has danced before?
11. How would you describe a 'typical' dancer? (background, abilities)
12. Has that changed since you started dancing?
13. How long do people generally stay dancing? Why?
14. Where do people go when they leave this establishment? Dancing?
15. What is the process like when one decides to change establishments?
16. What is the process like when one decides to leave dancing?
17. What kind of relationship do you have with your co-workers?
18. How does this compare to other places you have worked?
19. Who would you call your 'boss'? What kind of relationship do you have with your boss?
20. How does this compare to other places you have worked?
21. Can you think of anyone who has experienced it differently than you? How and why?
22. (What relationship do you have with clients?)
23. If I wanted to become a dancer today what would I have to do? How would I go about becoming a dancer?
24. What advice would you have for someone starting in this profession? Why?
25. Would you change elements of your job if you could? Why and what kind of elements?
26. Have all your bosses been males?
27. Do you prefer male or female bosses? Why or why not?
28. Do you know anyone that has had a different experience than you in this area?

Ideas / Questions To Consider (Added after Initial Interviews)

1. How do you feel about your job?
2. Does your job affect who you are outside of work?
3. Does your job affect your relationships with your partners?
4. How do you view your clients?
5. How do you view men? Has that changed?
6. Is it easy to get customers to buy you drinks? What role does alcohol play in the clubs?

7. How do you get regular customers?
8. How do you convince a customer to buy a dance from you? And to continue buying dances?
9. Is it always a 'no touch' environment? Can you think of an example where this was an issue?
10. Is this place topless only or both topless and nude? Does that matter to you?
11. What is the relationship between managers and dancers?
12. Have you danced elsewhere? Were / are your experiences the same as in FYEO? Can you describe (similarities / difference)?
13. Are special events (bachelor parties) the same as a regular night?
14. Describe an incident where you felt a customer 'was out of hand'?
15. Describe an ideal customer
16. What do customers want?
17. On a typical night, how does it start, end, etc?
18. Can you tell me about the nature of your employment contract? (e.g. club fees)
19. Can you tell me about the house rules? (e.g. discipline, importance of particular rules)
20. What is the role of a house mother? Have you ever worked with a house mother? What are your experiences?

Interview Guide for Management Participants

1. Can you tell me about the House Rules? (e.g. types, how enforced)
2. Can you describe the nature of the dancers' employment contract? (e.g. house fees, scheduling)
3. On any given night how many girls are working? Does that vary?
4. What can you tell me about the backgrounds of the dancers? How long do they stay dancing? How old are the dancers?
5. Can you tell me about the role of house mother?
6. What is the management / managers relationship with the dancers? What is the structure of management (all men?) – is that common?
7. Is this topless / full nude? Was it always? What has changed? Why?
8. Does it matter to the clients / dancers if it is topless only or full nude?
9. How many dancers come from completing a dance class to audition?
10. Have any of the dancers danced elsewhere? How do they describe / compare those experiences? What is the same and different about FYEO and other clubs?
11. What is the dancers' relationships with clients?
12. On an average night how much do the dancers charge for a dance? Does that vary (e.g. sit downs)? What is an average night's earnings?

APPENDIX II

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Appendix III

List of Exotic Dancing Locations and Clubs Evident in Newspaper

Analysis

Locations	Club Names
Aberdeen	Bierkeller
Basingstoke	Blue Velvet
Birmingham	Club Crème
Blackpool	Club Lapello
Bridgwater	Conrad's
Bristol	Diamond Doll
Cheltenham	Drake's
Chorley	Fantasy Bar
Cork	Fez Club
Croydon	For Your Eyes Only
Darlington	Goodfellas
Doncaster	Honeyz
Dublin	Hot Legs
Dundark	La Petite
Edinburgh	Leg and Co
Galway	Legs 11
Glasgow	Majingos
Hull	Palace
Leeds	Perfect 10
Limerick	Playmates
Lincoln	Po Na Na
London	Privilege
Manchester	Purple Door
Middlesbrough	Secrets
Milton Keynes	Senorita's
Newcastle	Seventh Heaven
Newquay	Silhouettes
Nottingham	Sirens
Peterborough	Smiles
Plymouth	Spearmint Rhino
Ripley	Stiletto
Sheffield	Stringfellows
Sunderland	Strings
Taunton	Temptations
Twickenham	Truffle Club
Ulster	
Wakefield	
Wigan	

Appendix IV

House Rules FYEO Newcastle

Rules of Conduct Agreement

THIS AGREEMENT is made on the _____ day of _____, 2004
between

[1] Name: _____

Stage Name: _____

The Dancer

and

[2] Name: _____

Representing F.Y.E.O. Management

This agreement entitles you to perform as a dancer at F.Y.E.O. provided that you agree to and accept the following Terms and Conditions: -

General Conditions

1. Before you start your first shift, you must provide documentary evidence, to the Manager or their nominated representative, as proof of -
 - (a) Your entitlement to work in the United Kingdom. This can be done by way of Passport, Employment Permit or Birth Certificate.
 - (b) That you are over the age of 18.
2. You cannot arrive to work, or whilst at work become, under the influence of Drink or Drugs.
3. You must abide by any reasonable directions given to you by the Management.
4. You are, and remain solely responsible, for your own tax and national insurance contributions. You are not an employee of F.Y.E.O.
5. You will observe and comply with all the conditions and restrictions as laid out in the Public Entertainment Licence granted in respect to F.Y.E.O. premises.
6. You agree to travel from F.Y.E.O. to your place of residence in a company approved taxi, or your own vehicle (if your partner is picking you up management must be informed), and by no other means of transport.

Arriving at the Club

1. Enter the club through the rear door, not the front door.
2. Pay the club fees as directed to the HouseMother or the Duty Manager.
3. Get changed and be on the floor sharply at your scheduled time. So if it take you an hour to get ready, then arrive at the club an hour before you are due to start.
4. No partners, boyfriends or husbands allowed in the club at all. If you have a friend you would like to come in, arrange it with the management first.
5. Full length dress whilst on the floor, high heels (if open-toed nails must be painted), hair and make-up to the required standard. All tattoos must be covered completely.
- 6.

On the Club floor

1. Tea/Coffee in the correct cuts. (Not mugs).
2. Don't sit on the walls or tables, sit on the chairs.
3. Don't walk around with a lit cigarette in your hand.
4. Don't walk around with drinks in your hands.
5. Drinks you are allowed are - Wine, Champagne, Dancers Cocktails and soft drinks. Only available through a waitress. **The bar is closed to you.**
6. Don't come to the front door. If you need change, see a member of staff.

Dancing

1. This is a 'No Physical Contact' Club, keep it that way.
2. Don't lick your nipples.
3. Don't go down on your knees while dancing.
4. Don't go down on the floor while dancing.

5. Don't use chairs or tables as props while you are dancing.
6. Don't put your head in a customer's lap.
7. Your dancing should be sensual not sexual. Infringing this rule will lead to disciplinary action and possible Dismissal.
8. Doubles, if you are doing a double for a customer remember it is still 'no contact' between you and the customer or the other dancer. No overcharging it is still only £10 each. Anyone caught over-charging will be suspended.
9. Don't move customers, dance for them at their tables, Do not move them to the next table or the other side of the club. Disciplinary action will be taken.
10. Don't straddle the customer.
11. Do one dance and collect your money. We will only back you on the first dance. If you roll them over and the customer refuses to pay then it is your problem.
12. Don't miss parades or stage rota, everyone is rostered for the stage. Which means dancing two tracks the last one topless. Times of the parades will be as directed by the Manager and will consist of all dancers walking on stage and straight off again. Disciplinary action will be taken.
13. Don't take credit cards off customers, you are not authorised to do so.
14. Do the 'meet and greet' then explain its £10 for a dance.
15. Wait for the customers to get their first drink before you join them, no matter what they say, they are not the boss. Disciplinary action will be taken.
16. Don't talk to the other girls or customers while on-stage. Give a 'performance'.
17. Don't laugh, talk or make faces when dancing for a customer, when your back is turned. Give them 100%, they are paying for it.
18. If a customer tries to touch you step away from them, remind them they are not allowed to touch, if he persists, stop dancing and tell management and we will deal with the situation.
19. After a dance, put all your clothes on before walking round the club.
20. If you get sick during the shift, talk to the Housemother/Duty Manager, they will arrange for your safe departure from the premises.
21. Last dance of the night, if you are not dancing return back stage.
22. Be discreet about recognising any customer, especially if they are a celebrity they might not want lots of attention.
23. Don't run around the club. It can cause accidents. If you bump into a waitress and spill her drinks you will have to pay for them.
24. You are not to arrange to go out with, or meet, whether its inside or outside of F.Y.E.O. premises, nor have any correspondence (Notes or business cards) with the customers. However don't be 'rude' to the customer if he insists on giving you his card, you must take the appropriate steps afterwards, that is pass it on to management for disposal.
25. Don't take revenge on a customer if they are rude or abusive to you. Inform management, who will deal with the situation.
26. Show some respect to the DJ's they have a job to do as well; they have to work under our guidelines.
27. All dancers must get a 'Data Protection Report' from the police. To apply for your report, go to your local Police station, and ask for a 'Data Protection Report' for prostitution and drugs. It will cost you £10, you will need photo ID e.g. Passport for proof of who you are.

Waitresses

1. Be a little more aware of the waitress, especially when it is busy, and show some respect, she has a job to do.
2. Allow them some space at the tables to get the drink orders, and to put it down when they return.
3. If a customer wants to buy you a drink then it is the customer that must order it.
4. If you have made a mess on the table, while you are waiting for customers, please help and clean up after yourselves, the waitresses are not there to act as your servants.
5. Please try to learn their names and not call them 'Oi', 'Hey' or 'You'.

Leaving the club

1. No one goes home early.
2. Do not go home with, or leave the premises with anybody (apart from other dancers) for any reason. This includes DJ's and Doorstaff. You will lose your job here. (This is regarded as a form of soliciting).

3. You cannot leave until after the club has been closed and clear of all it's customers, when you leave it will be by the rear door and under the supervision of security.

Any breach of the above will lead to the immediate termination of this agreement and your immediate expulsion from ALL F.Y.E.O. premises.

In consideration of you permitting me to perform at F.Y.E.O. I hereby agree to the above Terms and Conditions

Signatures

[1] _____

The Dancer

[2] _____

**For the
management**

Appendix V

House Rules FYEO Mayfair London

Legal Name: _____

Stage Name: _____

General information:

1	When you start at For Your Eyes Only, you need to go to your local Police Station and obtain a personal Data Protection Report.	
2	We need a photocopy of your passport showing proof of your age and identity. If you are not from the EEC, we will need to see a work permit.	
3	When you arrive at the club, use the side entrance on Shepherd Market, or walk through Bar Sapphire. When leaving use the side entrance. Please arrive and leave quietly.	
4	Club fees: £45. £20 is to be paid on arrival and the remaining £25 at any time during the night, or at the end of your shift.	
5	Shifts start at 9pm. You must be ready to go on the floor at this time. Lateness will not be tolerated, and may result in a fine or dismissal.	
6	All dancers are required to wear elegant evening wear to come below the knee, cat suits, two pieces and high heels (if open, toe nails must be manicured) until 12am, after that any costume/dress (please check with management). Hair and makeup to be of required standard. If you want to change your hair drastically, consult the management.	
7	You may drink Wine, Cocktails, Shooters, Champagne and soft drinks. You are responsible for your own actions. If alcohol is influencing your dancing style or attitude whilst in the club, you will be removed from the floor, sent home or sacked!! Tea and coffee are also available.	
7a	If and when your customer offers to buy you a drink, orders of cocktails, shooters & bottles of champagne, would be highly appreciated by your waiting staff. A cocktail <u>"with a straw"</u> means you would like it made without alcohol. Speak to your waiting staff for more details.	
8	No partners, boyfriends, girlfriends or husbands are allowed in the club. If you have a friend that would like to come in, please check with the management first. Do not give out your phone number, or take numbers from customers. Mobile phones are not to be carried on the floor at anytime during opening hours. DO NOT LEAVE WITH CUSTOMERS OR STAFF, AS THIS WILL RESULT IN DISMISSAL.	
9	You are required to wear at all times a thong or Bikini bottom (no see-through material) on the first floor, full nude dancing only takes place on the second floor.	
10	This is a 'NO CONTACT CLUB' - Please keep it that way!!! (You should maintain a minimum 3 ft gap)	
11	Do not walk around the club with a cigarette or a drink in your hand.	
12	You may only sit with or dance for a customer for up to FIVE SONGS . If a customer would like you to stay, there are guidelines of hourly rates on every table.	
12 a	For every half hour that you sit with a customer you are required to pay the club a sit down fee of £15.00 and before you begin to sit down, you must inform a manager that you have a sit down. It is in your own best interest that you receive full payment before you begin the sit down as the club cannot guarantee payment if you do not follow these guidelines	
13	Do not approach or interrupt a customer when he is sitting with or having a dance from your fellow dancers and please do not approach a customer until they have placed their drink order.	
14	Do not be late for the stage show or you will be subject to a fine.	

15	Collect your money for your dances as you do them, do not roll them over. In plain English this means you must collect payment at the conclusion of each individual dance, as the club can only guarantee you payment for one dance. Customers who wish to pay by Credit Card may purchase Dance Vouchers through the waiting staff or from the reception with a minimum purchase of six vouchers per transaction.	
16	If any customer touches you, back off, get dressed and inform security and management.	
17	You must re-dress at the conclusion of each performance before walking around the club. Do not run around the club; it can cause accidents.	
18	When you are dancing, do not obstruct any walkways or fire exits.	
19	If you ask to go home early and are allowed, you will still be charged the full club fee.	
20	If you are sick, please call 07815 453 715 before 3pm so that we can arrange to cover your shift. If you are sick for longer than 3 days, we reserve the right to see a doctor's certificate.	
21	Last song of the night. If you are not dancing, please go immediately backstage. Once you are dressed and ready to leave the club, you must wait until a member of security lets you in. This is for your own safety.	
22	Please respect the DJ's. You must request a particular song to dance to on stage, if he cannot play it for some reason, just perform to the alternative song.	
23	Any business cards and/or telephone numbers that you receive from customers must be handed over to a member of management immediately.	
24	Do not take revenge on a customer if they are rude to you; let us deal with it.	
25	Fully read and familiarise yourself with the Staff Conduct Handbook.	
26	You must attend all dancers meetings as and when required.	
27	You may be required to do PR work for the company.	
28	VIP customers may require more discretion and attention, however you must still operate within the guidelines as detailed. VIP customers must also adhere to the general rules and conditions of the club.	
29	Be aware of the waiting staff especially when it is busy. Move out of their way if they are carrying heavy trays.	
30	When sitting with a customer, sit on stools, as they are designed for you. When waiting for a customer sit on the fixed furniture, take your empty glasses and dirty ashtray when you leave.	

Dancing: Topless and Fully Nude

1	Do not spread your legs.	
2	Keep both feet flat on the floor while dancing, especially when nude	
3	Do not lick your nipples or anybody else's.	
4	Do not brace your legs in between the customers legs and do not straddle the customers legs either.	
5	Do not put your hands down or play with your underwear.	
6	Do not go down on your knees while dancing for customers	
7	Do not use chairs or tables as props.	
8	Do not put your head into or near a customer's lap.	
9	Do not move customers; dance for them at their table. Or ask the management.	
10	Do not touch another dancer, when performing a double dance.	
11	Floor work is to be only performed on stage.	

12	Underwear must be fully removed, not just around the knees or ankle's when performing fully nude.	
13	When nude your hand may be "placed" over your genitals. This does not allow you to stroke or slide your fingers across yourself.	
14	Do not open or spread yourself when dancing nude	
15	If dancing in the nude area the customer must be returned to his table when finished	
16	Your dancing should be erotic not explicit	
17	On completion of a nude dance the customer may wish for another, as you will be already nude at this stage you must adapt your dance accordingly.	
18	Do not insert your fingers in your genitals	
19	If you have genital piercing please make sure as with all jewellery it is of a good quality	
20	Do not pull your underwear up into your lips nor use any props (ties, boas or such like) to slide between your legs	
21	At all times be aware where your underwear is, if you lose them re-dress and inform management ASAP	
22	If underwear is of the side tie variety, customers are not allowed to undo them for you	
23	If you are dancing and it is the time of the month, please make sure that your tampon string is either cut and or is not visible (common sense I know, but it does happen)	

**WELCOME TO
"FOR YOUR EYES ONLY"**

I have read and fully understood these conditions; I will adhere to these conditions and acknowledge that failure to do so may result in a fine, disciplinary action or dismissal.

Signature: _____

Date:

Manager Signature: _____

Date:

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